BOEING AND LOCKHEED JV NEEDS RELIEF ON RUSSIAN ENGINES BEFORE GPS LAUNCH BID

News / Manufacturer

A joint venture of **Lockheed** Martin Corp and **Boeing** Co, United Launch Alliance, aid it cannot bid in a U.S. Air Force competition to launch a GPS satellite unless it gets some relief from a ban on use of **Russian** rocket **engines**.

ULA Chief Executive Officer Tory Bruno told reporters in Cape Canaveral, Florida, that the company was seeking a partial waiver on trade sanctions enacted last year which ban U.S. military use of the Russian RD-180 engine that powers ULA's primary workhorse Atlas 5 rocket.

The issue is now in the hands of Defense Secretary Ash Carter, Bruno said. Without the waiver, he said, ULA could not compete for that launch or any other new national security launches until an American-built engine is ready in 2019.

© 2015-2026 50SKYSHADES.COM — Reproduction, copying, or redistribution for commercial purposes is prohibited.

"That's not a viable business model," he told reporters.

Bruno said the company needed a decision to be able to submit a bid for the GPS launch competition, the first time in nearly a decade that launches of large U.S. military satellites will be opened to competition.

Claire Leon, director of the Launch Enterprise Directorate at Air Force Space Command, said ULA has the option of formally requesting an RD-180 waiver as part of its bid.

"It is critical to the Air Force that we get more than one bidder. We are actively working different ways to make it possible for ULA to bid," Leon told reporters on a conference call. "We are hoping that they will bid on this proposal."

U.S. lawmakers banned use of the Russian engines for U.S. military and spy satellite launches last year after Russia's annexation of the Crimea region of Ukraine.

The Air Force earlier this year approved privately held Space Exploration Technologies, or SpaceX, to compete for such launches against ULA, which has been the monopoly provider for most Air Force satellite launches since its creation in 2006.

The Air Force issued final rules for the GPS 3 launch competition on Wednesday, and bids are due Nov. 16.

"Today I still have no engines to bid," Bruno told reporters after ULA's 100th consecutive successful launch, an unmanned Atlas 5 rocket carrying a Mexican communications satellite.

The ban does not affect RD-180 engines used for NASA and commercial missions, but whenever ULA taps its current RD-180 inventory for non-military flights, it cannot order a replacement for later use on a military missions. Bruno said ULA is burning through its supply of RD-180 engines at a rate of one every four to six weeks.

Bruno said the ban affected 24 of 29 engines that ULA had ordered from Russia, but not paid for, before Russia invaded Crimea. The five engines that could be used under the law had already been assigned to other missions and were not available for ULA to use in a bid for the GPS III launch, he said.

Bruno said he was encouraged that U.S. lawmakers had allowed use of four more engines in a compromise version of the fiscal 2016 defense authorization bill. But President Barack Obama has said he plans to veto the bill, which means ULA needs a Pentagon waiver.

09 OCTOBER 2015

SOURCE: AEROTIME
ARTICLE LINK:
https://50skyshades.com/index.php/news/manufacturer/boeing-and-lockheed-jv-needs-relief-on-russian-engines-before-gps-launch-bid

© 2015-2026 50SKYSHADES.COM — Reproduction, copying, or redistribution for commercial purposes is prohibited.