

The Hybrid Space Program: A Commercial Strategy for NASA's Constellation Program

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ABSTRACT

NASA is facing unprecedented responsibilities coupled with an inflexible budgetary environment. In order to satisfy all of the agency's demands within the prescribed budget, NASA should re-evaluate its strategy on low earth orbit transportation. The commercial space industry has demonstrated significant progress through NASA's COTS program and is poised to provide low-cost human transportation to low earth orbit. The President, Congress, and NASA should cancel the troubled Ares I program and reorganize Project Constellation to utilize commercial spaceflight capabilities through the use of the Space Act Agreements. By establishing a hybrid space program that synthesizes the best of commercial and civil aerospace, NASA can ensure program sustainability for Project Constellation in a Post-Apollo world.