



# NASA administrator concerned about potential job losses

February 7, 2010 1:31 a.m. EST



Charles Bolden conceded that he was responsible for not preparing NASA employees for possible changes.

**(CNN)** -- On the eve of Sunday's launch of space shuttle Endeavour, NASA Administrator Charles Bolden said he supports President Obama's goal of making the space industry a commercial venture, but is concerned about potential job losses at the agency.

Under Obama's proposed 2011 budget, NASA would take a back seat to private ventures. It would receive \$6 billion over five years to invest in space technology research

and develop private space taxis. This would replace NASA's traditional role of building its own spacecraft.

## STORY HIGHLIGHTS

NASA administrator concerned about potential job losses at the agency

Charles Bolden: "We are departing from the model of the past"

Shuttle program will cease this year, with only five more launches scheduled

President Obama's proposed budget would cancel the Constellation lunar program

"We are departing from the model of the past, in which the government funded all of human space activities," Bolden told reporters.

"This represents the entrance of the entrepreneurial mindset into a field that is poised for rapid growth and new jobs. And NASA will be driving competition, opening new markets and access to space, and catalyzing the potential of American industry," he added. "This is a good investment for America."

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The proposed budget -- which aims to tighten the nation's purse strings in certain areas while increasing money used to create jobs - - would cancel NASA's Constellation program, which had sought to send astronauts back to the moon by 2020.

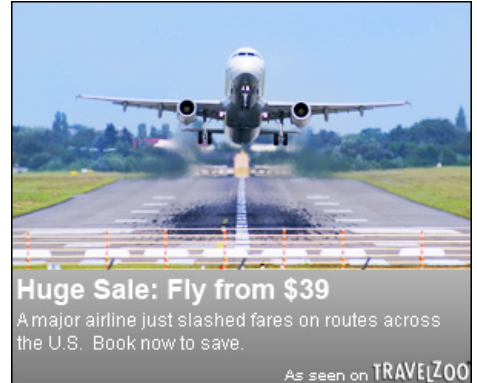
Bolden conceded that many NASA jobs will be lost if Obama's budget passes, and said he was responsible for not preparing NASA employees for the changes that might occur.

"The reason why the NASA work force is not better prepared was because I didn't listen to people ... who talked about how we should roll these things out," Bolden said. "I thought I knew better, to be quite honest. So we rolled out the budget, we rolled out everything in the manner we did and it was screwed up."

"I learned a very hard lesson," he said.

Bolden said he hopes to recoup about 1,000 jobs by persuading Congress to keep some or all of the Constellation's Ares program, and that he was involved in talks on Capitol Hill. "Those are the sorts of negotiations I have to do," he added.

NASA already has begun planning and designing the hardware, propulsion systems and related technologies for the Ares V cargo launch vehicle -- meant to be the "heavy lifter" of America's next-



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generation space fleet, the agency has said. It would be used to launch equipment for use on space missions, and will have a heavier lift capacity than the Ares I booster.

Constellation was to follow NASA's space shuttle program, which, after about 30 years of taking astronauts to space, is scheduled to end later this year, following five more flights.

Critics say it is wasteful to abandon Constellation after \$9 billion in federal money already has been spent on technology specifically designed for its missions.

The Endeavour is set to launch at 4:39 a.m. Sunday for its trip to the International Space Station. NASA said preparations remain on schedule, and the weather forecast is favorable.

Commander George Zamka will lead the mission, which is designated STS-130. Terry Virts will be the pilot, and mission specialists Nicholas Patrick, Robert Behnken, Stephen Robinson and Kathryn Hire will be aboard, NASA said.

Virts will be making his first trip into space.

The crew will deliver to the space station a third connecting module, the Italian-built Tranquility node and the seven-windowed cupola, which will be used as a control room for robotics. Three space walks are planned.

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The fact is, a lot of people have a malice towards NASA that they cannot explain. If NASA was not taxpayer supported and offered you free shuttle rides, many of you would still disapprove of them.

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Guest

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Nobody disapproves of NASA. It is that is difficult to feel sorry for them when this is happening everywhere

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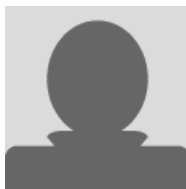
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While it is sad that many knowledgeable, experienced and educated people will be out of work all I can say is

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'Welcome to the real world, this is what it is like out here'. Hopefully they will be able to find other gainful employment in the civilian space industries and other industries as well. Now [...more](#)

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*Guest*

Guest below: we are already taxed enough for all of those things that NASA "does".

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• [Guest](#)

*Guest*

Knowledgeable, experienced, and educated people have been having to go through layoffs for years now in the IT industry. Hundreds of thousands of jobs outsourced overseas. This is a reality today. Most people are not protected by government deep pockets and taxpayer dollars. I am an engineer in [...more](#)

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• [Guest](#)

*Guest*

Making money is not NASA's purpose. It is to develop technology for America & the rest of the world. Maybe we should put a tax on every single thing that has originated from or benefited from the work done by the people at NASA and use it for their budget. I guarantee problem solved!

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*Guest*

Most of these people ARE in the real world. They are contractors who work for NASA...these are the people losing their jobs. Were you aware that 88% of Constellation's workforce is made up of contractors?

You should read the posts below from some of them. I have been on both sides of the fence ( [...more](#)

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*Guest*

First, NASA's budget was not cut, it was INCREASED! So, tell me then, how does this help with feeding the hungry. Second, the money that was allocated for Constellation will be used "to invest in space technology research and develop private space taxis." In other words, NASA funded. So, NASA will [...more](#)

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• [Guest](#)

*Guest*

You are right. Cut is now and leave it cut. That will fix the repetition problem.

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• [Guest](#)

*Guest*

That's my point exactly and is what I meant when I said this administration just wants to CHANGE something/everything, no matter if it's the right thing to do or not.

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• [Guest](#)

*Guest*

6 billion isn't much. We've already spent 9 billion on the Ares design. We need to follow through with it. We must not go back to the drawing board again and repeat ourselves over and over and repeat ourselves over and over!

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• [Guest](#)

*Guest*

No worries. Without a real mission, it will be cut in the future.

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Guest

Guest

I am a contractor worker at NASA JSC. What most of you do not realize is, it is NOT the civil servants here who will be laid off. Our Center Director Mike Coats, told us the other day that it is the Contractor workforce that will be affected, and hit hard. He said it takes an act of Congress to l ...more

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It will make no difference whatsoever. There are currently 8 million human faces out there without work.

This is nothing new and it is not limited to NASA.

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I work security at at JSC. I make with a lot of overtime about \$30k-\$35k. Many of us stand to lose our jobs because of this. No one is safe!

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Thank you for putting a human face on this issue. If you and your coworkers can say what you just said and make it heard across the nation, I am hoping you can make a difference. When people start to realize that several thousand middle class workers are being laid off while were spending billions ...more

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They will get laid off also. Even the military has RIFs and without the budget NASA will have no choice.

Besides, even if NASA holds together, the contractors are gone anyway. That is reality no matter what happens to NASA.

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Hopefully obamer will realize that this will just make his ratings go down and will change his mind just like everything else he said he would do (gitmo, health care, etc,etc,etc)

Less than 3 years people... grin & bear it. Just hope NASA can keep it together till then.

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I like that: obamer =)

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NASA reminds me of the goose that lays the golden egg.

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Nobody is proposing that NASA be 'trashed'. The article says the financing of NASA wil no longer be on the backs of the tax-payers. Instead, this will become an entrepreneurial market venture. Who knows? This could turn out to be good for NASA. I'm sure Richard Branson is crunching numbers right now ...more

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"...Private corporations are just going to make it cheap & quick to make a buck." This is true about every American corporation and something needs to be done in Congress to stop the bleeding, but I'll not hold my breath waiting for this to happen.

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*Guest*

*Guest*

"We can have it another way as well: not at all"

...

I would hate to live in this guys world... :(

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We can have it another way as well: not at all.

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After you invest 6 billion, which is not all that much compared to the several trillions being thrown back & forth in the Whitehouse, you'll have those companies going down to mexico or overseas to avoid the regulations that the govt will throw on them. The main reason NASA is sucking up so muc ...[more](#)

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