

NASA's chief scientist on climate priorities

MIT's ion aircraft

Inside DARPA's midair drone recovery

AEROSPACE

★ ★ M E R I C A ★ ★ ★

S P A C E

DEBRIS

Debris pierced a hole the size of a period at the end of a sentence in NASA's \$77 million Solar Max satellite.

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A CLOSE CALL ON ISS • A GLOBAL SNAPSHOT •
A HIPPOCRATIC OATH FOR DEBRIS REMOVAL

Gambling on advanced air mobility
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The last hurdle

AFTER A DECADE OF DEVELOPMENT, one final verification test is all that stands between NASA's first Space Launch System rocket, shown here shortly after sunset March 17 on its way to Launch Complex 39B at Cape Canaveral, and the design's first launch.

NASA late last year released a calendar of several possible launch windows for the Artemis I mission, an attempt to send an uncrewed Orion capsule slingshotting around the moon. But before committing to a launch date, NASA has said it wants to complete a fuel loading test and simulated countdown scheduled for early April. NASA watchers, nevertheless, are enjoying speculating over the likely launch date, and the consensus seems to be that between June 6 and June 16 is most likely.

The rocket made its 11-hour, overnight trek atop a massive crawler-transporter. In the wet dress rehearsal, NASA and its contractors will fill the dual tanks in the SLS core stage with liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen while the launch countdown clock ticks down to just under 10 seconds. SLS then will be rolled back to the Vehicle Assembly Building to permit at least two weeks of analysis to verify that the rocket is ready for Artemis I. ★ — *Cat Hofacker*

PHOTO: JOHN TYLKO