After aborted SLS hot-fire test, NASA and Boeing will try, try again



NASA will make another attempt next month to test-fire its massive Space Launch System rocket after its first try was cut short, the agency said Friday night.

The rocket's 212-foot-tall core stage will try to fire its four engines for eight minutes at NASA's Stennis Space Center in Mississippi. The attempt is the last milestone "Green Run" test before the behemoth rocket gets shipped to Florida for its debut launch toward the moon.

All four of the rocket's Aerojet Rocketdyne RS-25 engines ignited together for the first time earlier this month. But what was intended to be an eight minute test only lasted a little over a minute – a much shorter runtime than what engineers needed to proceed to Florida. The SLS core has been in development for a decade, and has consistently been late and over budget.

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“Conducting a second hot fire test will allow the team to repeat operations from the first hot fire test and obtain data on how the core stage and the engines perform over a longer period that simulates more activities during the rocket’s launch and ascent,” NASA said in a blog post late Friday night.

NASA is targeting November for the SLS’s first launch, but the agency’s inspector general and the Government Accountability Office, the country’s biggest watchdog agency, say that’s unlikely. Instead, they indicated the launch will likely to slip into 2022. NASA remains publicly optimistic.

“It is still possible to launch Artemis I this year with this test in February,” NASA spokeswoman Kathryn Hambleton told *The Verge.*

https://www.theverge.com/2021/1/29/22256976/nasa-boeing-repeat-sls-hot-fire-test