

Boeing has informed its employees that NASA may cancel SLS contracts

The primary contractor for the Space Launch System rocket, Boeing, is preparing for the possibility that NASA cancels the long-running program.

On Friday, with less than an hour's notice, David Dutcher, Boeing's vice president and program manager for the SLS rocket, scheduled an all-hands meeting for the approximately 800 employees working on the program. The apparently scripted meeting lasted just six minutes, and Dutcher didn't take questions.

During his remarks, Dutcher said Boeing's contracts for the rocket could end in March and that the company was preparing for layoffs in case the contracts with the space agency were not renewed. "Cold and scripted" is how one person described Dutcher's demeanor.

Giving a 60-day notice

The aerospace company, which is the primary contractor for the rocket's large core stage, issued the notifications as part of the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (or WARN) Act, which requires US employers with 100 or more full-time employees to provide a 60-day notice in advance of mass layoffs or plant closings.

"To align with revisions to the Artemis program and cost expectations, today we informed our Space Launch Systems team of the potential for approximately 400 fewer positions by

April 2025,” a Boeing spokesperson told Ars. “This will require 60-day notices of involuntary layoff be issued to impacted employees in coming weeks, in accordance with the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act. We are working with our customer and seeking opportunities to redeploy employees across our company to minimize job losses and retain our talented teammates.”

The timing of Friday’s hastily called meeting aligns with the anticipated release of President Trump’s budget proposal for fiscal year 2026. This may not be an entire plan but rather a “skinny” budget that lays out a wish list of spending requests for Congress and some basic economic projections. Congress does not have to act on Trump’s budget priorities.

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