Ball Aerospace Completes MethaneSAT Preliminary Design Review

BOULDER, Colo., Feb. 20, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Ball Aerospace successfully completed the preliminary design review (PDR) of the advanced spectrometer instrument for the MethaneSAT Flight System, a 350-kilogram satellite that will locate and measure methane emissions around the globe. With the completion of PDR, Ball will proceed with the critical design phase.

"We are excited to be a part of a mission that aims to study and address the impact of methane on the environment and climate," said Dr. Makenzie Lystrup, vice president and general manager, Civil Space, Ball Aerospace. "MethaneSAT fits well with Ball's long history of earth science, our commitment to sustainability and our experience in providing highly-calibrated measurements of environmental factors related to ozone, weather and pollution."

MethaneSAT is expected to be launched in 2022 by MethaneSAT LLC, a subsidiary of Environmental Defense Fund (EDF). The non-profit is dedicated to creating innovative science-based solutions to critical environment challenges, including anthropogenic methane emissions, a significant contributor to global climate change.

Two extremely sensitive spectrometers sit at the heart of the Ball-designed instrument that will measure a narrow part of the shortwave infrared spectrum where methane absorbs light, allowing it to detect concentrations as low as two parts per billion. In addition to the MethaneSAT instrument, Ball Aerospace is providing flight systems integration and testing, launch support, and commissioning services.

"MethaneSAT is built around a set of high performance technologies and sophisticated analytics tools that when combined provide a major leap in our ability to measure and quantify even low-level methane emissions across the globe from space," said mission co-lead Dr. Steven Hamburg, who also serves as Chief Scientist for Environmental Defense Fund. "We're asking a lot of our technical partners and Ball Aerospace is rising to the occasion."

Ball Aerospace has more than six decades of experience providing leading-edge systems, delivering instruments that span the electromagnetic spectrum for a wide range of government and commercial applications to help predict the weather, map air quality and monitor the Earth's environment. For example, Ball built LIDAR and wide-field camera instruments for NASA's Cloud-Aerosol LIDAR and Infrared Pathfinder Satellite Observations (CALIPSO) mission; the Tropospheric Emissions: Monitoring of Pollutions (TEMPO) instrument to measure air quality for a NASA mission; and the Ozone Mapping and Profiler Suite (OMPS) of hyperspectral instruments that measure the global distribution and vertical structure of ozone for NASA and NOAA missions. OMPS-1 and OMPS-2 are currently flying on Suomi NPP and the Ball-built Joint Polar Satellite System-1 (JPSS-1, now NOAA-20), respectively. Ball is also building OMPS instruments for follow-on JPSS satellites.

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