

## INTRODUCTION OF MEDIGAP PORTABILITY REFORM LEGISLATION

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 6, 1997*

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker. Over the course of the last 2 years, we have spent a great deal of time in Congress debating the future of Medicare. The debate between my colleagues from both sides of the aisle has been sharply partisan and at times bitter. It is my hope that we can move past the rhetoric and begin to work on legislation which will improve the health care coverage of seniors in our country. I am happy to say that the legislation we are introducing today accomplishes these goals.

I am proud to join Congresswoman JOHNSON and Senators CHAFEE and ROCKEFELLER in introducing this legislation. Our targeted Medigap bill will provide the same guarantees of portability and pre-existing condition protections to seniors enrolled in Medigap, achieved in the health insurance portability and accountability law. This very important legislation will improve the health care coverage of America's seniors. This legislation embodies a policy I have always supported to ensure that seniors can get continuous coverage for their Medigap policies. With this legislation, seniors will be able to explore options such as managed care, secure in the knowledge that they can return to Medicare as they know it. Seniors are now free to try new health managed care options without being permanently locked into potentially costly out-of-pocket expenses from which they were previously protected by their Medigap policies.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in passing this legislation and I commend Congresswoman JOHNSON and Senators CHAFEE and ROCKEFELLER for their work on this issue.

## "MARKETS HELP U.S. SPACE COMPETITIVENESS"

HON. DANA ROHRBACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 6, 1997*

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, January 6, the Orlando-based Florida Today newspaper printed an interesting article about the growing competition within the United States to launch commercial satellites into space. In particular, the article reports on the new Long Beach, CA-based Sea Launch Co.

This new Boeing-led consortium will transport rockets out to a floating launch platform in the Pacific southeast of Hawaii, where they can be launched more efficiently from the equator. Last year I attended the groundbreaking of Sea Launch's facilities in Long Beach along with several other colleagues, and can report that their initiative is most impressive.

But the focus of the article is on how the Sea Launch effort poses a competitive threat to the older Cape Canaveral Air Station, where the Air Force's 45th Space Wing operates the eastern range and several part-Government, part-commercial launch facilities. In

particular, the question of why Boeing would create a project to launch satellites elsewhere than Florida—or the new California and planned Alaska commercial spaceports—is raised.

And the not-too-surprising answer comes from the House's own DAVE WELDON, the distinguished Representative of Florida's space coast region: Since many observers agree that Government-managed launches have too much redtape and extra expense, the Air Force needs to step back from the day-to-day operations. My colleague was exactly on point, and courageous for saying so, albeit politely.

Let me be more blunt. The fact is that we've been launching satellites on expendable rockets for nearly 40 years. The high costs of space lift today are a result of throwing away the rocket as we launch it, and the huge bureaucracy we've put in place to run the launches.

We're already making significant investments in new technology with the NASA X-33 program to move toward fully reusable, single-stage-to-orbit rockets. But it's just as important that we bring the efficiencies of competitive free enterprise to bear on such well-understood activities as space launch. Which means we have to decrease the Government's involvement.

Besides, the Air Force should be investing its limited resources in applying technologies such as those resulting from X-33 and the prior DC-X program to realize new capabilities like military spaceplanes, which could revolutionize warfighting and force structure requirements.

In other words, if the Air Force can transfer the mundane function of space cargo transportation to the private sector, the Air Force can on space warfighting, becoming the "Space and Air Force" described in its new vision statement, Global Engagement.

In summary, I strongly support the gentleman from Florida, Mr. WELDON, in his statements, and commend the entire article to my colleagues.

[From Florida Today, Jan. 6, 1997]

SPACE COAST HAS NEW CHALLENGER AS LAUNCHES HEAD OUT TO SEA

(By Robyn Suriano)

CAPE CANAVERAL.—Far away, in the cold shipyards of Scotland and Norway, work is under way on a project that gives local space advocates the shivers.

The object of their worry is a floating launch platform longer than a football field that will be used to send rockets and their satellites into space from sea.

The Boeing Co.-led international venture, called the Sea Launch Co., is the first of its kind and more than a novel way to get payloads into orbit.

It could be a serious threat to Cape Canaveral Air Station, where U.S. companies are fighting to keep their share of the world's commercial launch business.

"What worries me is Boeing finding it more attractive to go through all the complexities of a sea launch operation as opposed to using the existing launch pads that we have here at Cape Canaveral," said Ed O'Connor, executive director of Florida Spaceport Authority, the Cocoa Beach-based organization trying to increase the state's commercial space business.

"There is a message in that, and that message concerns me more than anything."

The new company was formed in April 1995 when Boeing, the Russian space agency and private companies in Norway and the Ukraine joined hands.

Although military rockets have been launched from ships since the late 1940s, Sea Launch is the first attempt to move commercial space missions off land.

What makes the venture potentially attractive to companies—and such a threat to the Cape—is that it will be the only launch site to be directly on the equator.

That's critical because most communication satellites must be placed into equatorial orbits to do their jobs.

By launching from that spot, satellite manufacturers could get an added benefit not found at the Cape, where rockets take off 30 degrees north of the equator.

A trajectory from the Cape requires the rockets to use more fuel to get their payload into the right orbit. Because they have to carry extra fuel to get in place, the rockets can't carry larger satellites.

Officials hope the sea launch plan will allow rockets to carry larger satellites into orbit at less cost, making more money for the companies involved.

"The shortest distance to that orbit (for communications satellites) is from the equator because it's straight up," Sea Launch President Ron Olson said. "Therefore, at that shortest distance you can put a bigger satellite into space."

If all goes according to plan, the first rocket should take off from the sea platform in June 1998 carrying a Hughes Communications satellite.

Another 14 launches—all using Ukrainian-made Zenit rockets—follow. Ten of those also will carry Hughes Communications satellites.

Sea Launch plans to run the operation from corporate offices in Long Beach, Calif.

From the California coast, the company's ship will set sail carrying the Zenit rockets in its hull while its upper decks serve as luxurious quarters for business executives.

The ship, currently under construction in Scotland, will need eight to 10 days to sail to a point southeast of Hawaii—smack on the equator.

There, it will meet a floating launch pad that has its own engines and can move under its own power. The mobile pad is a former oil drilling platform undergoing renovation at a Norwegian shipyard.

For the first few launches, the rockets will be transferred from the ship to the floating pad while the two are docked together in port, then set sail simultaneously for the equator.

But Sea Launch eventually wants to leave the launch pad at sea for several months, using the ship to carry satellite-laden rockets to the site, where they will be transferred to the platform by cranes.

The Zenit rockets then would be launched from the pad using an automated system that will reduce the number of people needed to get the rockets ready, said Olson.

"The infrastructure that's required for launching at sea is about half of what you see at the Cape," Olson said. "We just won't have a lot of people running around like they do at the base."

"So therefore, the operating costs are considerably less than what other people have to offer."

Olson declined to discuss Sea Launch prices, saying only the company follows trade agreements made by the U.S. government. In doing so, Sea Launch cannot cut its prices any more than 15 percent below launches by other U.S. companies from the Cape.

A Hughes official, Barry Fagan, said the Sea Launch concept is attractive for many reasons—including price—but mainly because the demand for launches is growing fast.

Seventeen Lockheed Martin Atlas and McDonnell Douglas Delta rockets were