



Rocket Lab-Built Twin Spacecraft Begin Mars Journey for NASA and UC Berkeley's ESCAPE Mission

November 13, 2025

LONG BEACH, Calif., Nov. 13, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Rocket Lab Corporation (Nasdaq: RKLb) ("Rocket Lab" or "the Company"), a leading launch and space systems company, today announced its two Explorer-class spacecraft for NASA and the University of California Berkeley's Space Sciences Laboratory have been successfully launched, beginning their journey to Mars to study the Red Planet's magnetosphere. NASA's Escape and Plasma Acceleration and Dynamics Explorers (ESCAPE) mission was launched by Blue Origin on November 13, from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station at 03:55 p.m. EST.

Rocket Lab has successfully established contact with the spacecraft and they are generating power. Now in orbit, the spacecraft will undergo commissioning by Rocket Lab's spacecraft operations team in the coming days, beginning with early checkouts including orientation stabilization and solar array deployment, followed by commissioning of flight computers, multiple antenna, guidance and navigation sensors and actuators, and the propulsion system leading up to the mission's first maneuvers.

Rocket Lab's [Explorer-class spacecraft platform](#) is a high delta-V, interplanetary member of its advanced satellite family. From contract award to launch, ESCAPE moved from design to spacecraft completion in just three and a half years – an aggressive timeline for a Mars mission. This was made possible by the Company's vertically integrated supply chain, which brings the production of solar arrays, reaction wheels, propellant tanks, star trackers, radios, avionics, flight software, and more entirely in-house.

"Mars missions have historically been measured in decades and come with price tags in the billions or hundreds of millions. With this mission we're bringing Mars closer, proving real interplanetary science can be done faster and more cost-effectively to unlock the solar system," said Sir Peter Beck, Founder and CEO of Rocket Lab. "ESCAPE is a major first, not just for Rocket Lab, but for commercial interplanetary science. It's the result of bold goals from NASA and UC Berkeley, enabled by our end-to-end spacecraft capabilities. We're proud to play a part in this mission and even prouder to know they're continuing our legacy at the Red Planet."

Rob Lillis, ESCAPE Principal Investigator and Associate Director for Planetary Science at the UC Berkeley Space Sciences Laboratory, says: "As PI, I'm very grateful to have a top-notch joint ops team at UC Berkeley and Rocket Lab taking care of the twin spacecraft out there in space. I'm both elated and relieved to see NASA's ESCAPE spacecraft healthy post-launch and looking forward to the next chapter of their journey to help us understand Mars' dynamic space weather environment."

Now in orbit, a complex and extended journey begins for Blue and Gold, with trajectory design led by Advanced Space LLC.

The alignment between Earth and Mars does not currently allow ESCAPE to use a traditional direct-to-Mars transfer. Instead, ESCAPE will launch into a "loiter" (or "Earth-proximity") orbit that loops around Earth's Lagrange point 2 (about a million miles from Earth, opposite the Sun) until the next planetary alignment window. Once the planets have reached the ideal alignment in fall 2026, the ESCAPE spacecraft will use an Earth gravity assist to begin the journey to Mars.

Throughout the mission, Rocket Lab and UC Berkeley spacecraft operators will command the spacecraft to conduct deep-space maneuvers, known as trajectory correction maneuvers (TCMs). The TCMs will boost the spacecraft's energy to reach Mars and provide navigation control to target their unique orbit insertion corridors. The spacecraft are scheduled to arrive at Mars in September 2027. The spacecraft will begin to transition to their first science formation in 2028.

ESCAPE will allow scientists to understand how the solar wind strips ions from Mars' atmosphere, offering insight into the planet's atmospheric escape history and space weather environment, and informing future human exploration strategies.

More mission information: <https://rocketlabcorp.com/assets/Uploads/RL-ESCAPE-Press-Kit-2025.pdf>

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Twin satellites built by Rocket Lab for NASA and the University of California Berkeley's Space Sciences Laboratory have been successfully launched on a mission to Mars, officially commencing the ESCAPE science mission.

+ About Rocket Lab

Rocket Lab is a leading space company that provides launch services, spacecraft, payloads, and satellite components serving commercial, government, and national security markets. Rocket Lab's Electron rocket is the world's most frequently launched orbital small rocket; its HASTE rocket provides hypersonic test launch capability for the U.S. government and allied nations; and its Neutron launch vehicle in development will unlock medium launch for constellation deployment, national security and exploration missions. Rocket Lab's spacecraft and satellite components have enabled more than 1,700 missions spanning commercial, defense and national security missions including GPS, constellations, and exploration missions to the Moon, Mars, and Venus. Rocket Lab is a publicly listed company on the Nasdaq stock exchange (RKLB). Learn more at www.rocketlabcorp.com.

+ Forward Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. We intend such forward-looking statements to be covered by the safe harbor provisions for forward looking statements contained in Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act") and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"). All statements contained in this press release other than statements of historical fact, including, without limitation, statements regarding our launch and space systems operations, launch schedule and window, safe and repeatable access to space, Neutron development, operational expansion and business strategy are forward-looking statements. The words "believe," "may," "will," "estimate," "potential," "continue," "anticipate," "intend," "expect," "strategy," "future," "could," "would," "project," "plan," "target," and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements, though not all forward-looking statements use these words or expressions. These statements are neither promises nor guarantees, but involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other important factors that may cause our actual results, performance or achievements to be materially different from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements, including but not limited to the factors, risks and uncertainties included in our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, as such factors may be updated from time to time in our other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"), accessible on the SEC's website at www.sec.gov and the Investor Relations section of our website at www.rocketlabcorp.com, which could cause our actual results to differ materially from those indicated by the forward-looking statements made in this press release. Any such forward-looking statements represent management's estimates as of the date of this press release. While we may elect to update such forward-looking statements at some point in the future, we disclaim any obligation to do so, even if subsequent events cause our views to change.

A photo accompanying this announcement is available at <https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/c3270d81-2c53-4b06-95c9-e195b943dcf0>