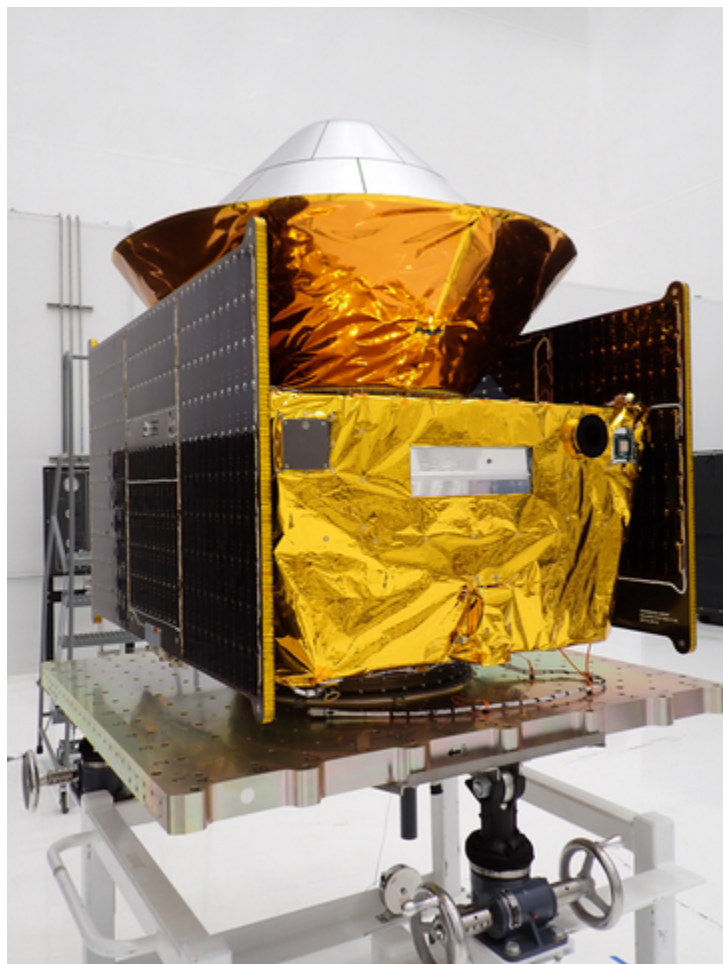




## Rocket Lab's Second Reentry Class Spacecraft for Varda Operating on Orbit Supporting Payloads for Air Force Research Lab and NASA

January 15, 2025

LONG BEACH, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Rocket Lab USA, Inc. (Nasdaq: RKL) ("Rocket Lab" or "the Company"), a global leader in launch services and space systems, today announced its second Pioneer spacecraft for Varda Space Industries, Inc. ("Varda") is successfully operating on orbit. The mission launched January 14, from Vandenberg Space Force Base at 11:09 PDT (19:09 UTC).



Rocket Lab's Pioneer spacecraft for Varda's W-2 mission in the cleanroom at Vandenberg Space Force Base. (Photo: Business Wire)

[Varda's W-2 mission](#) includes a Rocket Lab Pioneer spacecraft and a Varda re-entry capsule carrying a spectrometer from the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL). The capsule employs a heatshield with a Thermal Protection System (TPS) developed in collaboration with NASA's Ames Research Center in California's Silicon Valley. These payloads are in addition to Varda's expanded pharmaceutical reactor which will expand capability and capacity for pharmaceutical processing. The W-2 mission follows on from Rocket Lab's first mission for Varda, which operated in orbit for eight months before returning to Earth in early 2024 in a [successful demonstration of the world's first orbital manufacturing mission conducted outside of the International Space Station](#).

Like the first Pioneer spacecraft for Varda, the W-2 Pioneer is delivering critical mission functions for Varda's 120kg capsule including power, communications, propulsion, and attitude control. Following the payload processing phase in orbit, Rocket Lab's spacecraft will guide and position Varda's capsule for deorbit, enabling a hypersonic re-entry and recovery at the Koonibba Test Range in South Australia, operated by Southern Launch.

The Pioneer spacecraft was designed, built, and tested at Rocket Lab's Spacecraft Production Complex and headquarters in Long Beach, California. It integrates Rocket Lab's vertically developed components and systems, including star trackers, propulsion systems, reaction wheels, solar panels, flight software, radios, composite structures, tanks, separation systems, and more.

"Another Rocket Lab spacecraft is in orbit, performing well, and supporting innovative new space capabilities for our mission partners Varda Space Industries," said Rocket Lab founder and CEO Sir Peter Beck. "We've built a deep expertise in guidance, navigation, and control, allowing us to precisely manage spacecraft operations in some of the

most demanding environments, ensuring that our customers, like Varda, can rely on us to safely and accurately deliver their mission goals, from on orbit operations to capsule re-entry."

"Varda and its partners are building a foundation layer for the orbital economy. The W-2 mission is in service of this goal," said Varda CEO and co-founder Will Bruey. "We are looking forward to many more successful missions, and a world where products made in orbit are seen as commonplace."

The W-2 mission is the [second of four spacecraft ordered by Varda](#) to support orbital processing, with the third spacecraft complete and awaiting shipment for launch.

Learn more about Rocket Lab's spacecraft for Varda: [Varda Space Industries | Rocket Lab \(rocketlabusa.com\)](#)

## **+ About Rocket Lab**

Founded in 2006, Rocket Lab is an end-to-end space company with an established track record of mission success. We deliver reliable launch services, satellite manufacture, spacecraft components, and on-orbit management solutions that make it faster, easier, and more affordable to access space. Headquartered in Long Beach, California, Rocket Lab designs and manufactures the Electron small orbital launch vehicle, a family of spacecraft platforms, and the Company is developing the large Neutron launch vehicle for constellation deployment. Since its first orbital launch in January 2018, Rocket Lab's Electron launch vehicle has become the second most frequently launched U.S. rocket annually and has delivered over 200 satellites to orbit for private and public sector organizations, enabling operations in national security, scientific research, space debris mitigation, Earth observation, climate monitoring, and communications. Rocket Lab's spacecraft platforms have been selected to support NASA missions to the Moon and Mars, as well as the first private commercial mission to Venus. Rocket Lab has three launch pads at two launch sites, including two launch pads at a private orbital launch site located in New Zealand and a third launch pad in Virginia. To learn more, visit [www.rocketlabusa.com](http://www.rocketlabusa.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, 2023, 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](http://www.sec.gov) and the Investor Relations section of our website at [www.rocketlabusa.com](http://www.rocketlabusa.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.

## **About Varda:**

Varda Space Industries is expanding the economic bounds of humankind by designing and building the infrastructure needed to make low Earth orbit accessible to industry, from in-orbit production equipment to reliable and economical reentry capsules. The company operates out of El Segundo, California with office and industrial production space. You can follow Varda on X (@vardaspace) and LinkedIn.

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