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**PRESS RELEASE 080311, March 8, 2011
AD ASTRA AND NASA SIGN SUPPORT
AGREEMENT ON VASIMR® TECHNOLOGY**
[Houston, TX For immediate release] – Ad Astra Rocket Company and NASA Johnson Space Center (JSC) have signed a Support Agreement to collaborate on research, analysis and development tasks on space-based cryogenic magnet operations and electric propulsion systems currently under development by Ad Astra. The agreement was signed on March 2, 2011 by NASA-JSC Director of Engineering, Mr. Stephen J. Altemus and Ad Astra's Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Franklin R. Chang Díaz.

The Support Agreement is the fourth entered into by the parties under an "Umbrella" Space Act Agreement, executed in December of 2007. That document established the basic framework for collaboration and serves as host to support agreements, such as this one, that define specific tasks and objectives to be accomplished over a certain period.

Among its most significant elements, this Support Agreement provides for bilateral engineering consultation in NASA's and Ad Astra's respective areas of expertise, including Ad Astra's VASIMR® technology and NASA's expertise in spacecraft development. Ad Astra will provide NASA with an assessment of VASIMR®'s high power low thrust trajectories over a number of mission scenarios ranging from near-Earth to deep space, while NASA will support Ad Astra's efforts to mature the design of the 200 kW VF-200 VASIMR® flight demonstrator. This support includes, among other things, engineering design on two of the VF-200 flight demonstrator's subsystems, integration support and structural engineering of interfaces with a

launch vehicle and a potential flight platform (e.g. ISS or free flyer). The Support Agreement also provides for the use of specialized NASA facilities and equipment that may be required for some of the testing.

ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY

Short for Variable Specific Impulse Magnetoplasma Rocket, VASIMR® works with plasma, an electrically charged gas that can be heated to extreme temperatures by radio waves and controlled and guided by strong magnetic fields. The magnetic field also insulates any nearby structure, so temperatures well beyond the melting point of materials can be achieved. The plasma can be harnessed to produce propulsion. In rocket propulsion, the higher the temperature of the exhaust gases, the higher their velocity and hence the higher their fuel efficiency. Plasma rockets feature exhaust velocities far above those achievable by their chemical cousins, so their fuel consumption is extremely low.

ABOUT AD ASTRA

Ad Astra Rocket Company was established in early 2005 to commercialize the technology of the VASIMR® engine, an advanced plasma propulsion system with potential to support an emerging in-space transportation market. The company has its main laboratory and corporate headquarters at 141 W. Bay Area Boulevard in Webster, Texas, USA, about two miles from the NASA Johnson Space Center. Ad Astra also owns and operates Ad Astra Rocket Company, Costa Rica, a supporting research and development subsidiary in Guanacaste, Costa Rica.