Satellite reaches California for next Sea Launch

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A communications satellite built for France-based Eutelsat has arrived in California to be prepared for liftoff from Sea Launch AG's oceangoing rocket pad.

The companies said Wednesday that the Eutelsat 3B spacecraft built by Airbus Defense and Space was flown from Toulouse to Long Beach Airport. It was then transported to a payload processing facility at the home port of the Sea Launch system's two vessels.

The self-propelled launch platform and command ship will sail from Long Beach to the equatorial Pacific for a mid-April liftoff.

The satellite is designed to last more than 15 years in orbit.

Sea Launch, now based in Switzerland, has been lofting heavy satellites into orbit since 1999.

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