Mission to Jupiter's icy moon confirmed

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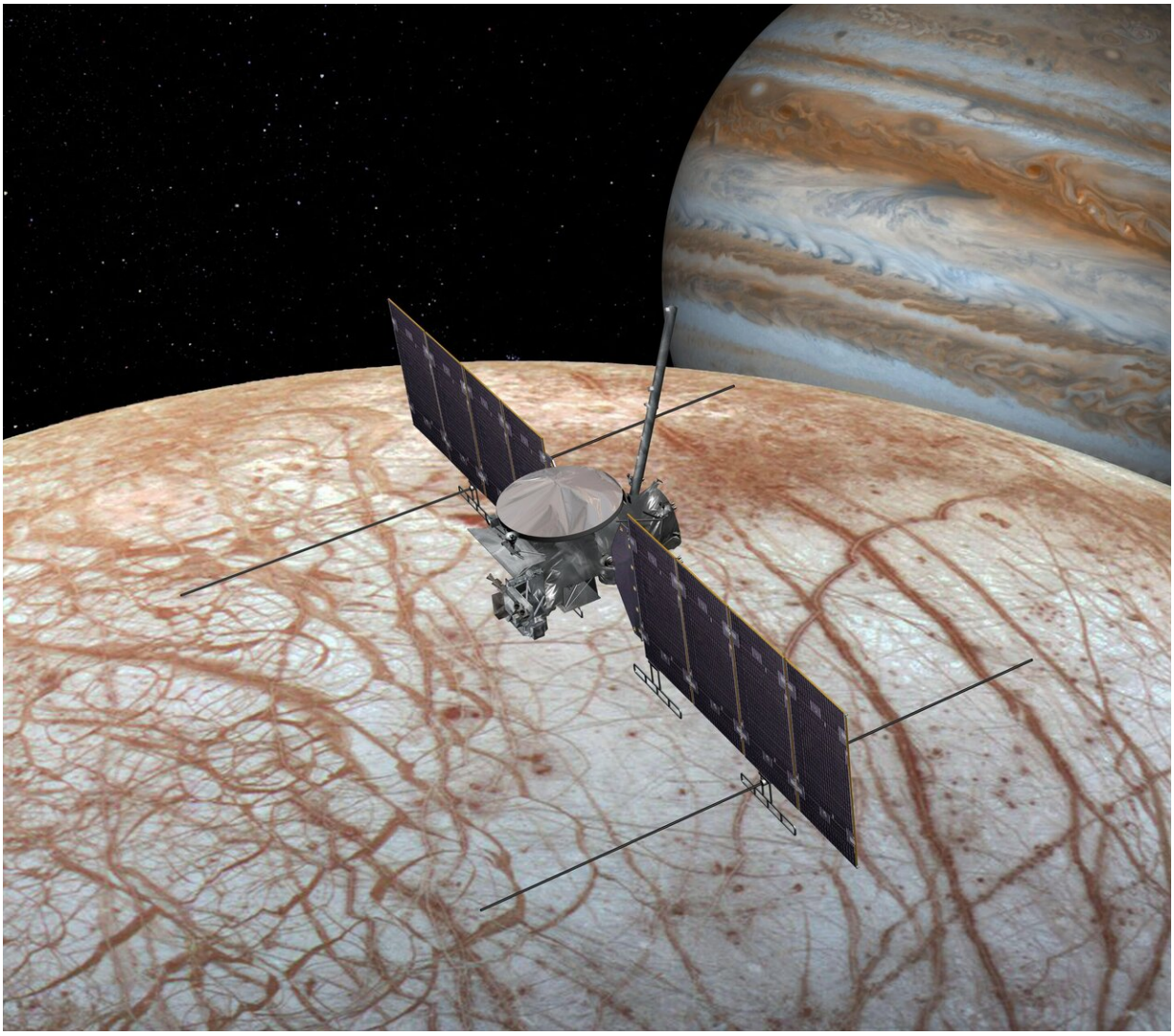

This artist's rendering shows NASA's Europa Clipper spacecraft, which is being developed for a launch sometime in the 2020s. This view shows the spacecraft configuration, which could change before launch, as of early 2016. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

An icy ocean world in our solar system that could tell us more about the potential for life on other worlds is coming into focus with confirmation of the Europa Clipper mission's next phase. The decision allows the mission to progress to completion of final design, followed by the construction and testing of the entire spacecraft and science payload.

"We are all excited about the decision that moves the Europa Clipper mission one key step closer to unlocking the mysteries of this ocean world," said Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator for the Science Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters in Washington. "We are building upon the scientific insights received from the flagship Galileo and Cassini spacecraft and working to advance our understanding of our cosmic origin, and even life elsewhere."

The mission will conduct an in-depth exploration of Jupiter's moon Europa and investigate whether the icy moon could harbor conditions suitable for life, honing our insights into astrobiology. To develop this mission in the most cost-effective fashion, NASA is targeting to have the Europa Clipper spacecraft complete and ready for launch as early as 2023. The agency baseline commitment, however, supports a launch readiness date by 2025.

Provided by Jet Propulsion Laboratory