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Launch of NASA's FUSE observatory delayed a day

By Justin Ray
FLORIDA TODAY

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. - NASA officials announced Saturday the launch of $120 million telescope aboard a Boeing Delta 2 rocket this week would be delayed at least a day because work was running behind schedule.

Routine pre-launch processing of the Far Ultraviolet Spectroscopic Explorer, or FUSE, at Cape Canaveral Air Station's pad 17A has been slowed due to poor weather, NASA said.

The schedule to ready the rocket and satellite for a Wednesday launch was tight and had little room for delays. The heavy rain finally broke the schedule.

"We have 50 gallons of work to get into a 20 gallon jar," NASA spokesman George Diller said.

Officials will meet Monday to firm up a new launch date, which is tentatively scheduled for Thursday during a window 11:39 a.m. to 12:57 p.m. EDT (1539-1657 GMT).

Once in space, FUSE will seek out the chemical remnants of the Big Bang believed to have created the universe 12 to 15 billion years ago.