

Connecticut Delegation Demands Answers on Tanker Decision

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Contact:

Contact For Larson - Emily
Barocas /202-225-7295/202-593-1377

For
DeLauro - Adriana Surfas/202-225-3661

For
Shays - Dave Natonski/202-225-5541

For
Courtney - Brian Farber/202-225-2076

For
Murphy - Kristen Bossi/202-225-4476

CONNECTICUT
DELEGATION DEMANDS ANSWERS ON TANKER
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FROM
AIR FORCE

Washington

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DC

-- Members of the

Connecticut Congressional Delegation are requesting a briefing from the Air Force on their decision to award the Tanker KC-X contract to Northrup Grumman and foreign-based EADS Corp over American-based Boeing.

The Air Force should answer questions about how they made their decision and why, given the current economic and security situations our country faces.

The delegation is particularly concerned because the decision impacts thousands of much needed

Connecticut

jobs. The Boeing planes included

engines produced by Pratt and Whitney and electrical systems from Hamilton Sundstrand.

Defense projects that have been outsourced to foreign countries have experienced significant delays and excessive cost overruns. The current Marine One helicopter contract awarded to Lockheed Martin and its British-Italian Partner, AgustaWestland-Finmeccanica, is billions of dollars over budget.

Given the size and importance of the tanker project, the Air Force has a responsibility to explain the basis of their decision to Members of Congress and more importantly, to the American people.

Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) said, "The fact that the Air Force did not even stop to consider the impact their decision would have on American jobs and the economy is very telling. Faced with a similar dilemma with their A400M project, European countries tossed out an American contractor in favor of local manufacturing. Yet, this is not the first time the Department of Defense has decided to ship jobs and contracts overseas rather than keep them in this country. Most recently the Marine One contract went to a company in Europe . The project is now over budget and not on time. We can't afford to have that happen with a project of the magnitude of the Tanker KC-X. For the security of our country and our future, the Air Force should consider our nation's core manufacturing base. By keeping these jobs in America we are preparing our workforce of the future to handle any challenges we may face. Connecticut used to be called the Arsenal of our Democracy because of the state's ability to produce what was necessary to build the mightiest military. The Air Force should not be complicit in disassembling that achievement. We can't rely on global mercenaries to propel the mightiest Air Force in the world."

"Awarding this Air Force Tanker contract to European Airbus continues a pattern of outsourcing our defense capability to foreign companies. This is harmful not only to our economy and our workforce, but also to our long-term national security interests," said Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro (CT-3). Given the current economic downturn, this decision is made even worse. The Air Force must explain this decision and I look forward to meeting with them."

"Further, the Air Force turned a blind-eye to the opportunity to secure the best product at the best value for the taxpayer while strengthening the economy and creating American jobs.

Christopher Shays (CT-04) said, "It seems to me, allowing the overseas manufacture of this critical refueling tanker program may present a security risk and harms the ability of U.S. manufacturers to compete with the European market."

Chris Murphy (CT-05) said, "I have serious questions about how an important defense project contract critical to our national security could go to a conglomerate based largely on foreign soil while our skilled workers and defense capabilities could be sitting idle. I am looking forward to meeting with the Air Force as soon as possible to find out how this decision was made, and if there is reason to reconsider it."

"This is a surprisingly short-sighted decision by the Air Force. The KC-767 is a low risk and proven platform for our aerial refueling needs. This shocking decision demands further Congressional scrutiny and as a member of the House Armed Services Committee I will demand answers from the Air Force. This announcement continues an alarming trend of awarding major defense contracts to heavily subsidized foreign competitors over our own domestic defense industry. As we learn more about how the Air Force made its choice, I look forward to working closely with the Connecticut Delegation to review and possibly challenge this unfortunate decision," said Congressman Joe Courtney (CT-02)