

Testimony of the Honorable Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress (PA-07)
Tuesday, March 15, 2015
House Appropriations Committee – Defense Subcommittee

Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Visclosky, and Members of the Committee, I want to thank you for inviting your colleagues here to testify before you today and thank you for holding this hearing. I have great respect for the thoughtfulness and diligence with which you approach your duties, and I know it's often challenging to balance competing needs with limited resources.

I'm before you today to talk about the importance of one of our most sophisticated military aircraft, the V-22 Osprey. The V-22 has been crucial to the success of a number of complicated combat operations. It offers troops in the field and their commanders a unique and unmatched flexibility. It's earned the praise of the men and women who fly it, who say that the V-22 enables them to move men and material around the battlefield unlike ever before.

The Osprey is constructed at Boeing's facility in Ridley Park, Delaware County. It's purchased under a five-year contract that Congress authorized in Fiscal Year 2013. Signing a multi-year contract saved taxpayers almost \$1 billion. But the President's 2017 budget request unexpectedly reduced the procurement of the Osprey from the agreed-upon 18 to 16.

The cut could raise unit costs, jeopardize jobs at the Boeing facility and incur additional and costs for taxpayers. And it deprives our troops two airframes that could be used on the battlefield.

The Marine Corps wants these two additional airframes: they were placed on its annual unfunded priorities list. The arbitrary cut included in the President's budget is just another demonstration of how it doesn't meet the needs of our men and women serving our nation in uniform.

The V-22 Osprey has proven itself to be a versatile and valuable tool in the hands of our warfighters. It's success is a tribute to the skills of the men and women who fly it -- and the talented workforce that produces it.

I ask that your committee continue its tradition of support for the V-22 by fully funding the production of 18 airframes in the Fiscal Year 2017 budget. The V-22 is working for our troops in the field. It's production is support good middle class jobs in Pennsylvania. And I urge you to support it.

Thank you for your consideration.