

Amendment Would Save Taxpayers Billions by Ending Program Pentagon Says It Does Not Need

Washington, DC – U.S. Reps. Tom Rooney (R-FL), John Larson (D-CT), Lynn Westmoreland (R-GA), Chellie Pingree (D-ME) and Tim Griffin (R-AR) today urged their colleagues in the House to support an amendment to strike funding for the wasteful extra engine program for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

The amendment, which they will offer on the floor this week, would save taxpayers \$450 million in the remaining seven months of fiscal year 2011. The Pentagon projects that to complete the extra engine project would cost approximately \$3 billion.

Rep. Rooney said: “The extra engine is a luxury our country simply cannot afford. The Pentagon has said repeatedly that they do not want or need an extra engine for the Joint Strike Fighter. As we’re looking for places to cut spending and save taxpayer money, this should be a no-brainer.”

Rep. Larson said: “This is a real test to the House's commitment to eliminate wasteful spending and excessive earmarking. The JSF extra engine is a \$2.9 billion earmark that the military doesn't want and our country cannot afford.”

Rep. Westmoreland said: “This program is an extravagance we can’t afford, pure and simple. Of the 28 aircrafts currently in operation, the F-16 is the only one with a dual source engine. At a time when our country is drowning in more than \$14 trillion in debt, every penny we can save the American taxpayers counts. I made a promise to my constituents that I was going to come to Washington and end the out-of-control spending that has plagued our country for the last two years, driving us to the brink of bankruptcy. And I can see no better place to start than with this duplicative and unnecessary program President Bush opposed, President Obama opposes, and Secretary Gates has referred to as ‘waste.’”

Rep. Pingree said: “A second engine for the F-35 is not only unnecessary and wasteful, it's nothing more than a giveaway to a big defense contractor and doesn't contribute to the national

defense.”

Rep. Griffin said: “The federal government must be a better steward of taxpayer dollars, and that includes the Department of Defense (DoD). No federal agency is exempt. The American taxpayer should not be asked to continue to fund the JSF alternate engine program because it is militarily unnecessary and a wasteful use of extremely limited and precious taxpayer dollars.”

Both the Bush and Obama Administrations have opposed the program, with Secretary Gates stating yesterday, “It would be a waste of nearly \$3 billion in a time of economic distress, and the money is needed for higher priority defense efforts.”

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