

# CH-47F Block II Procurement

Army National Guard

Fiscal Year 2024 Requirements for the Army National Guard



# NGAUS



## The Issue

Despite the Army's Special Operations planned procurement of MH-47G Block II's, there are no upgrades planned for the Army National Guard. The ARNG consistently deploys in support of overseas combat operations performing the same missions as the Active Component and provides domestic emergency response. As the Army acquires new equipment and weapons platforms, those systems must be fielded to Active Component and Reserve Component units simultaneously and proportionally to ensure a fully interoperable and lethal Total Force.

◀ CH-47 with the 111th Aviation Regiment Mississippi Army National Guard

## Background

For FY20, the Army proposed delaying CH-47F Block II production by at least 5 years to fund different priorities, like the Future Vertical Lift Program. The Army has already identified competitors for the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft (FARA) and a Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA). Given the Army's focus on modernization and the fact that the ARNG has the oldest Chinook airframes in its fleet, transitioning to Block II represents the most logical next step to prevent a heavy-lift capability gap.

The Army's Future Vertical Lift Program does not currently have a program in place to replace the Chinook, which means a replacement could be decades away, leading some to call the CH-47 a "100-year helicopter." As the Army's only heavy lift helicopter, the Chinook is vital to Overseas Contingency Operations and Homeland Security needs of our nation. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) is in the midst of upgrading the MH-47G Chinook fleet to the Block II configuration, but the big Army is not currently seeking the similar upgrade to the CH-47F Chinook fleet.

The Army's delay in executing the F-Block II program continues to place combat capacity at critical risk and threatens the high operational tempo of an aging operational force. Additionally, delaying the CH-47F Block II production increases procurement and sustainment costs due to a smaller production base, reduced demand of key parts, and reduced aircraft availability due to quantities and repair parts costs.

## Recommendation

Designate procurement of at least 6 CH-47F Block II aircraft for the Army National Guard within the defense appropriations bill. With the vast majority of Army National Guard Chinook units consisting of six aircraft per state, this approach will ensure Army National Guard Chinook units are equipped simultaneously and proportionally to the Active Component for a fully interoperable and lethal Total Force.



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