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Hawker Beechcraft to File Suit with Court of Federal Claims on U.S. Air Force Light Air Support Contract Bidding Process Following GAO Dismissal



BY TEXTRON AVIATION

Hawker Beechcraft is filing a suit today with the Court of Federal Claims following notification late last week that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has declined to review its protest of the decision by the U.S. Air Force to exclude the company's Beechcraft AT-6 from the Light Air Support (LAS) competition. The company still has no concrete reasons for the AT-6's exclusion, having been denied explanation by the U.S. Air Force on two occasions. The LAS contract is valued at nearly \$1 billion of U.S. taxpayer money and exclusion of the AT-6 could result in a de facto award to a non-U.S. company.

“We are disappointed in the GAO’s decision as we were relying on their investigation to provide transparency into what has been a bidding process of inconsistent, irregular and constantly changing requirements,” said Bill Boisture, Hawker Beechcraft chairman and CEO. “We find ourselves still without answers, which is unacceptable, and continue to believe that our exclusion from this important contract was made without basis in process or fact.”

The AT-6 is a world-class, light attack aircraft that has been evaluated and proven capable through a multi-year, Congressionally-funded program led by the Air National Guard. Hawker Beechcraft and its industrial partners worked closely with the Air Force for two years to develop parameters for the LAS competition and invested more than \$100 million preparing to meet the Air Force’s specific requirements for a light attack aircraft.

The benefits of the AT-6 far outweigh that of the competition’s offering, including the following important factors:

- The AT-6 is designed and manufactured in the U.S. to be used by the U.S and its allies.
- Keeping this contract in the U.S. will help preserve 1,400 domestic jobs at 181 companies in 39 states.
- The AT-6 draws its heritage from the airframe of the number-one training aircraft in the world, the Beechcraft T-6. The company has built more than 725 T-6 aircraft, which are used to train every fixed-wing military pilot in the United States and are successfully operated by six allied air forces around the world. The graduation to the AT-6 light attack airplane would be a natural progression.
- The AT-6 is the sum of the Air Force’s proven T-6, A-10C mission system and MC-12W sensor suite, which offers the Department of Defense logistics and cost efficiencies that no other aircraft in the competition can match.
- The weapons and avionics systems included on the AT-6 are familiar to NATO allies and have been proven effective on many continents and in other NATO aircraft.

“As a U.S. company, we believe we deserve a fair chance at this contract,” Boisture said. “Hawker Beechcraft has been delivering U.S. Department of Defense aircraft certified to military specifications for more than 50 years. We are qualified and prepared to continue doing so for the Air Force’s LAS operations with our capable, affordable and sustainable AT-6 aircraft.

“We are asking concerned Americans, members of the flying military and anyone else dedicated to the success of U.S. manufacturing, preservation of the aerospace industrial base and U.S. tactical air power to take action to ensure the AT-6 gets proper consideration for this Air Force contract. Visit the AT-6 website at www.missionreadyat-6.com to send a letter to your congressional leaders.”

Hawker Beechcraft is a world-leading manufacturer of business, special mission, light attack and trainer aircraft – designing, marketing and supporting aviation products and services for businesses, governments and individuals worldwide. The company’s headquarters and major facilities are located in Wichita, Kan., with operations in Salina, Kan.; Little Rock, Ark.; Chester, England, U.K.; and Chihuahua, Mexico. The company leads the industry with a global network of more than 100 factory-owned and authorized service centers. For more information, visit www.hawkerbeechcraft.com.

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