Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 12, 2025

The Honorable Daniel P. Driscoll
Secretary of the Army
1950 Defense Blvd
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Driscoll:

We write to express our serious concern with the Army's apparent lack of commitment to future procurement of the UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter. The Black Hawk has been the Army's vertical lift platform of choice for nearly the last half century and will continue to be critical to the Army's operations for the next several decades.

From air assault to maritime warfare and from search and rescue to domestic emergency response, the Black Hawk has accumulated over 15 million flight hours across diverse environments and punishing conditions. As we look ahead, new UH-60M helicopters will be required even as the Army's Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA), the MV-75 tiltrotor, completes development and testing and is eventually fielded. The Army, and especially the National Guard, will continue to need additional new UH-60Ms for utility, combat, medevac, and other missions, especially as the Army retires older UH-60Ls and ends the 60V modification effort. There is currently no alternative helicopter that is proven with the necessary capabilities, and we cannot afford the long delays and increased costs that would result from a break in UH-60M production. An eleventh multi-year to procure the Black Hawk is therefore critical to affordably produce Black Hawks, to meet the needs of the U.S. and our allies, and to maintain a healthy industrial base that can sustain the fleet, derisking Army development.

Furthermore, the other services and our allies will also continue to rely heavily on Hawk H-60 family helicopters, meaning an interruption in the Army's commitment to the Black Hawk will have cost, delivery, and support ramifications reaching beyond the Army. The MH-60 Seahawk is critical to Navy operations ranging from anti-submarine warfare to medical evacuation to surveillance and reconnaissance, and the Air Force utilizes the HH-60W for combat search and rescue. Additionally, the Coast Guard relies on the MH-60T Jayhawk to save lives and protect our sea borders. In fact, in a hearing of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Coast Guard Acting Commandant Admiral Kevin Lunday stated that the "H-60 will be essential … it's the key component in our rotor-wing fleet and the backbone of our aviation fleet … the H-60 will be a mainstay as it has been," adding that he intends for the Coast Guard to continue to procure new H-60 helicopters in the near future. All of these Hawk aircraft leverage a common chassis and parts that are critical to keep in production.

While ensuring steady procurement, it is also clearly in our nation's interest to commit to fully modernizing the Black Hawk to meet the battlefield challenges of today and tomorrow. Industry

and the Department of Defense (DoD) have invested significantly in modernizing the Black Hawk to address future evolution of the battlefield including capabilities such as autonomous flight, drone warfare, extended range, and increased lift. Autonomy has been a major focus of modernization which will upgrade safety and survivability, enhance lethality, improve aircrew protection, and defeat threats. Initial tests of the autonomous Black Hawk, currently totaling more than 700 flight hours, demonstrate a range of operational capabilities such as automated landing zone detection to obstacle avoidance. The Army and industry have also demonstrated launch and control of Launched Effects with Black Hawk for years and will be delivering the capability in 2026. Continued investment in modernization is critical to future production as well as to continued and enhanced utility for the Army and the joint force.

Your troubling comments at the June 4 hearing of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense continue to raise serious questions about the Army's commitment to the Black Hawk. While you affirmed that "for the next sizeable portion of time, the Black Hawk will be part of the mix" and agreed that it will continue to be a "critical tool" for the Army, you also noted that due to the changing nature of warfare in the coming years, the Black Hawk will play less of a role in the future. Even more concerningly, you stated that you were "unwilling to make commitments" about future procurement for the Black Hawk. These claims fly in the face of the widespread, well-substantiated recognition that for many decades to come our military will need a robust, cutting-edge utility helicopter capability – the kind that only the Black Hawk can provide.

Your comments also contradict the Army's public commitment to a new multi-year procurement several times during the Fiscal Year 2025 budget process. As part of the Army's February 2024 Aviation Investment Rebalance announcement, the Army affirmed it would "[c]ommit to a new multi-year contract to procure the UH-60M Blackhawk helicopter – a new airframe with a 20+ year service life – and invest in upgrades for the Blackhawk" and that without this commitment "the Army faced the unacceptable risk of decline and closure of production and sustainment lines." The Army has recognized the potential harm to future military readiness and the industrial base: companies may be forced to lay off skilled workers who would be difficult to rehire or replace, even if the Army decides to restart production down the line. Small- and medium-sized businesses who are suppliers for the program may be forced to close their doors entirely.

We understand the need to reevaluate programs to ensure they meet the Army's current needs and goals, but it is difficult to understand your comments on June 4, especially in light of the Army planning and evaluation that informed the Aviation Investment Rebalance decision. Your testimony notwithstanding, we hope you will come around to understanding just how essential stable Black Hawk production and a healthy industrial base are to sustaining the robust, modernized fleet of H-60 aircraft that our nation will long depend upon, even as FLRAA eventually enters the Army aviation fleet.

Given the crucial nature of continued investment in the UH-60M Black Hawk to U.S. national security, we respectfully request a briefing within 60 days of receiving this letter on the Army's plans for the Black Hawk in the near and long term – including how the Army expects to continue using the Black Hawk in the decades ahead, how the Army is planning to move ahead with Black Hawk modernization, and how the Army intends to follow through on its prior

commitment to another multi-year procurement contract for the Black Hawk.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

Jim Himes
Member of Congress

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

CC: General Randy A. George, Chief of Staff of the Army