

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – WASHINGTON, DC
APRIL 25 – 27, 2023**

**REMOTELY PILOTED SYSTEMS FOR THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD – GREY EAGLE
EXTENDED RANGE**

ISSUE: The operational demand for Gray Eagle ER in the Active Army has been higher than expected. Even with the 200+ Gray Eagle ER aircraft that are in service now, their frequent use has swelled flying hours, and as a result, more than a quarter of Gray Eagle aircraft currently in service will reach the end of their expected service life in less than three years. Adding Gray Eagle ER units to the National Guard will significantly help alleviate high rates of deployments, personnel loss and meet the National Defense Strategy to equip National Guard units to match those of the Active Component so they are always ready for combat.

Most importantly, domestic use of these systems for emergency response is becoming necessary for states, as climate change drives longer and more intense fire seasons. In California, the Cal Guard is on the vanguard, often deploying the Gray Eagle ER sister aircraft, the Air Force MQ-9, for life-saving firefighting, disaster and search and rescue operations. The establishment of Gray Eagle Companies in the Army National Guard would provide these assets for a host of critical domestic uses, such as wildfire support, search and rescue, maritime security, counter narcotics, and emergency communication relays during national disasters. The Gray Eagle ER program annually provides California \$460 million in economic benefit.

ACTION: We request funding authority in the FY24 NDAA of \$700,000,000 for 24 Gray Eagle Extended Range aircraft and ground stations to authorize the full MTOE for two Companies Unit of Gray Eagle ER aircraft in National Guard Divisions. This request will equip the next two of the eight US Army National Guard Aviation Divisions to begin to fulfill their MTO&E allocations. The FY23 Defense Appropriation funded 12 Gray Eagle aircraft at \$350,000,000, however these aircraft were sent to Illinois and Kentucky, bypassing California.

Procurement Request: \$700,000,000 for the Gray Eagle Extended Range aircraft - Army National Guard.

BACKGROUND: The Gray Eagle Extended Range (ER) aircraft is the Army’s preferred platform for Reconnaissance, Intelligence Surveillance and Targeting (RSTA). Its use is particularly important because remotely piloted aircraft fill the Army’s scout mission gap left from the retirement of 900 OH-58 Kiowa Warrior aircraft. The relevance of Gray Eagle ER to the future fight is highlighted by the fact that it was designated a “key enabler” by Army Futures Command for the Future Vertical Lift aviation ecosystem.