

Defense departure is Boeing's latest 'thank you' for Washington's \$8.7 billion tax break - SPEEA



SEATTLE – The Boeing Company's decision to move large portions of its Defense, Space and Security division out of the Puget Sound region is the latest snub by corporate leaders to the engineers and technical workers who designed every successful Boeing product and to Washington state tax payers.

Boeing announced late Monday (Sept. 29) the departure of the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) and the F-22 Raptor programs from the Puget Sound region to Oklahoma City and St. Louis, Missouri. Engineers and technical workers represented by the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001, will bear the brunt of the job losses. SPEEA represents 2,258 employees in the Boeing division.

The latest job losses come less than one year after Washington legislators approved \$8.7 billion in tax breaks for the state's aerospace industry, with Boeing in line to receive the lion's share.

"The silence from Olympia is deafening," said Ray Goforth, SPEEA executive director. "Why are Washington taxpayers subsidizing Boeing to move thousands of jobs out of state?"

The cuts will impact large segments of employees at the Boeing Kent Space Center and at the Seattle Developmental Center, with other locations also affected. SPEEA represents 914 in Kent and 920 at the Seattle Developmental Center.

Approved during a special session called by Governor Jay Inslee in November 2013, the Aerospace Tax Preference Bill grants the tax breaks with no reciprocal requirement that companies enhance or even maintain current job levels in Washington. The legislation remains the largest tax break in U.S. history.

Since passing the aerospace tax breaks, Boeing announced plans to move 1,000 Research and Technology jobs and 1,000 Commercial Airplane Support Services jobs out of Washington state.

"Every state except Washington that offered Boeing tax breaks for the 777X program tied jobs to the legislation," Goforth said. "Now, we have taxpayers subsidizing the movement of good engineering, technical and machinist jobs out of our state."

SPEEA will do a thorough review of the company's plans and its rollout to ensure members are dealt with according to provisions outlined in union contracts. The closing of the program in Washington will be the subject of effects bargaining in the coming months.

A local of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), SPEEA represents 24,450 aerospace engineers, technical workers and pilots at Boeing facilities in Washington, Oregon, Kansas, California, Utah and Florida. The union also represents aerospace professionals at Spirit AeroSystems in Wichita, Kansas, and Triumph Composite Systems, Inc., in Spokane, Wash.

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