



PRESS RELEASE

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TopLine Corp Warns: Loss of Single Source Vendor Could Compromise US Defense Industry

Irvine, California -- TopLine Corporation, a producer of specialized electronic components is raising concerns over potential industry delays to deliver critical military and space components, specifically Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA). "The last assembly step in the production of FPGA components that are used in defense and aerospace applications requires services to attach solder columns to FPGA devices," observes TopLine CEO Martin Hart.

Currently, only a single source is approved to provide services to attach copper-wrapped solder columns to FPGA devices, as registered in the Qualified Manufacturer List (QML-38535) published by an agency of the Department of Defense. "Generally, FPGA makers don't feel a sense of urgency to broaden their reliance beyond that single source. Surprisingly, FPGA makers are not required to voluntarily qualify multiple sources. Therein lies the problem," says Hart.

"Customers in the defense and aerospace industry should be nervous since they rely on a monopoly supplier with the ability to raise prices at-will because no competition exists. If a sudden production stoppage were to occur, it would take two-years before another supplier could become qualified to resume production at needed levels. Such an occurrence might cause warfighters and advanced avionics to stay grounded, possibly tipping the balance of peace in the World Order," adds Hart.

Hart believes that advocate stakeholders, including major customers of FPGA devices such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrop-Grumman and Raytheon, should articulate a shared vision to accelerate a program to qualify multiple suppliers. Hart asserts that he has already kick-started the initiative by identifying five candidates who are ready to become providers of copper-wrapped column attachment services, under the condition that the FPGA companies pay for the

cost of QML qualification. So far, two FPGA makers have taken steps to broaden their supplier base for solder column attachment services.

Hart states, "It is in the best interests for the U.S. industrial base to execute risk mitigation strategies and to ensure a robust, secure and resilient capability to produce critically needed FPGA components by strengthening the supply chain for key assembly processes including column attachment services. A relatively modest investment to qualify more suppliers can substantially reduce the risk of an FPGA shortage instead of waiting for an unexpected disaster to strike, potentially costing the defense industry hundreds of millions of dollars," warns Hart.

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