Boeing 737 MAX Ramps to 47 a Month — and Wants 53

by Joseph Duncan | Apr 26, 2026 | Aviation World, News | 0 comments

Boeing's best-selling jet is finally accelerating. CEO Kelly Ortberg confirmed during the company's Q1 2026 earnings call that 737 MAX production will reach 47 aircraft per month this summer — up from 42 — with a target of 53 per month by year's end. After years of production caps, quality crises, and regulatory constraints that made the 737 programme synonymous with industrial dysfunction, Ortberg's message was blunt: all systems are go. The ramp-up was made possible by three structural changes that

Boeing has been working toward since 2024. The FAA lifted its 737 MAX production cap in March 2026. Boeing completed the reintegration of Spirit AeroSystems, giving it nose-to-tail control over fuselage quality for the first time in two decades. And a new fourth production line opened at the Everett factory — the first time the MAX has been built outside the traditional Renton final assembly facility.

> ### Quick Facts
>
> **Aircraft:** Boeing 737 MAX (all variants)
>
> **Current production rate:** 42/month (Q1 2026)
>
> **Summer 2026 target:** 47/month
>
> **Year-end 2026 target:** 53/month
>
> **Q1 2026 deliveries:** 143 jets (all Boeing types)
>
> **Unfilled backlog:** 4,800+ 737 MAX orders
>
> **New production line:** Fourth line opened at Everett, WA (April 2026)
>
> **FAA cap lifted:** March 2026

How Boeing Got Unstuck

The 737 MAX production story since 2019 has been a saga of self-inflicted limitations. The two fatal crashes and subsequent grounding imposed a production halt. When production restarted, it was capped by the FAA at 38 per month — a regulatory ceiling that reflected Washington's distrust of Boeing's quality systems. A door plug blowout on an Alaska Airlines 737-9 in January 2024 intensified scrutiny and kept the cap in place.

The Boeing 737 final assembly line at Renton, Washington — a fourth production line has now opened at the Everett facility to push output toward 47 aircraft per month. Photo: US State Dept / Wikimedia Commons

What changed in 2026 was not a single breakthrough but the cumulative effect of reforms that Boeing had been implementing under enormous pressure. The Spirit AeroSystems reacquisition — completed in late 2025 — brought fuselage production back under Boeing's direct control. Quality inspectors now report through Boeing's own chain of command rather than through a separate company with different incentives. The backlog of unfinished fuselages at Moses Lake, Washington, was cleared, freeing over 1,000 specialised mechanics to return to the active production lines. The FAA, after months of enhanced oversight, concluded that Boeing's quality management system had improved sufficiently to justify lifting the cap. The decisior was not unconditional — Boeing remains under heightened surveillance — but it removed the regulatory ceiling that had constrained output for two years.

The Everett Gambit

The new fourth production line at Everett is Boeing's most significant manufacturing decision in a generation. The Renton factory — where every 737 has been built since 1970 — has three production lines and is essentially full. To reach 47 and eventually 53 per month, Boeing needed additional floor space, and Everett — the enormous factory complex that currently builds 767s and 777s — had room.

A United Airlines 737-9 MAX — the type is the backbone of Boeing's commercial backlog with over 4,800 unfilled orders.

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Building the MAX at two locations introduces complexity. Tooling, workforce training supply chain logistics, and quality oversight must be duplicated. But it also provides resilience — if one facility has a disruption, the other keeps producing. And it signals that Boeing sees MAX demand lasting long enough to justify the capital investment.

The 53-Per-Month Finish Line

The 47 rate is a waypoint. The real target is 53 per month — the number Boeing's finance team has identified as the threshold at which the 737 programme begins meaningfully reducing its 4,800-order backlog. At the current rate, it would take Boeing over eight years to fill existing orders. At 53 per month, that timeline compresses to roughly six years — still long, but manageable for airline customers who have been waiting for deliveries since before the pandemic. Reaching 53 by year-end is ambitious. It requires the Everett line to reach full cadence within months, Spirit-integrated fuselage quality to hold at higher volumes, and the supply chain — still recovering from post-COVID disruptions — to deliver engines, avionics, and interiors on time. GE Aerospace's LEAP-1B engine, which powers the MAX, is itself production-constrained, and any delay in engine deliveries will bottleneck the entire programme.

What It Means

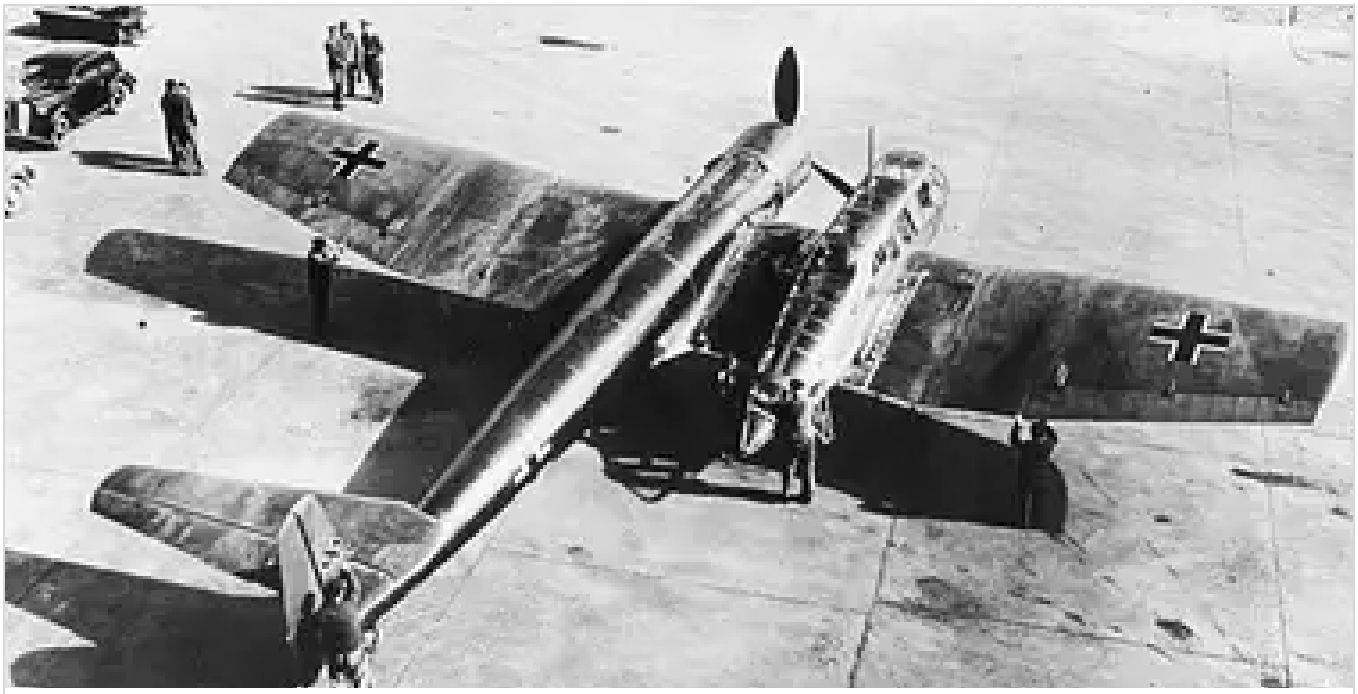
For Boeing's investors, 47 per month is proof that the industrial recovery is real. For airline customers, it means delivery slots that have slipped repeatedly for five years may finally start arriving on schedule. For Airbus — which has been gaining market share relentlessly while Boeing was grounded — it means the competition is back. The 737 MAX remains the most ordered commercial aircraft in history. Whether Boeing can build them fast enough, reliably enough, and safely enough to honour that backlog will determine the company's future for the next decade. *Sources: CNBC, Simple Flying, AirInsight, Aviation A2Z, AFM Aero*

Related Posts

Boeing 737-7 and -10 Certification Finally in Sight

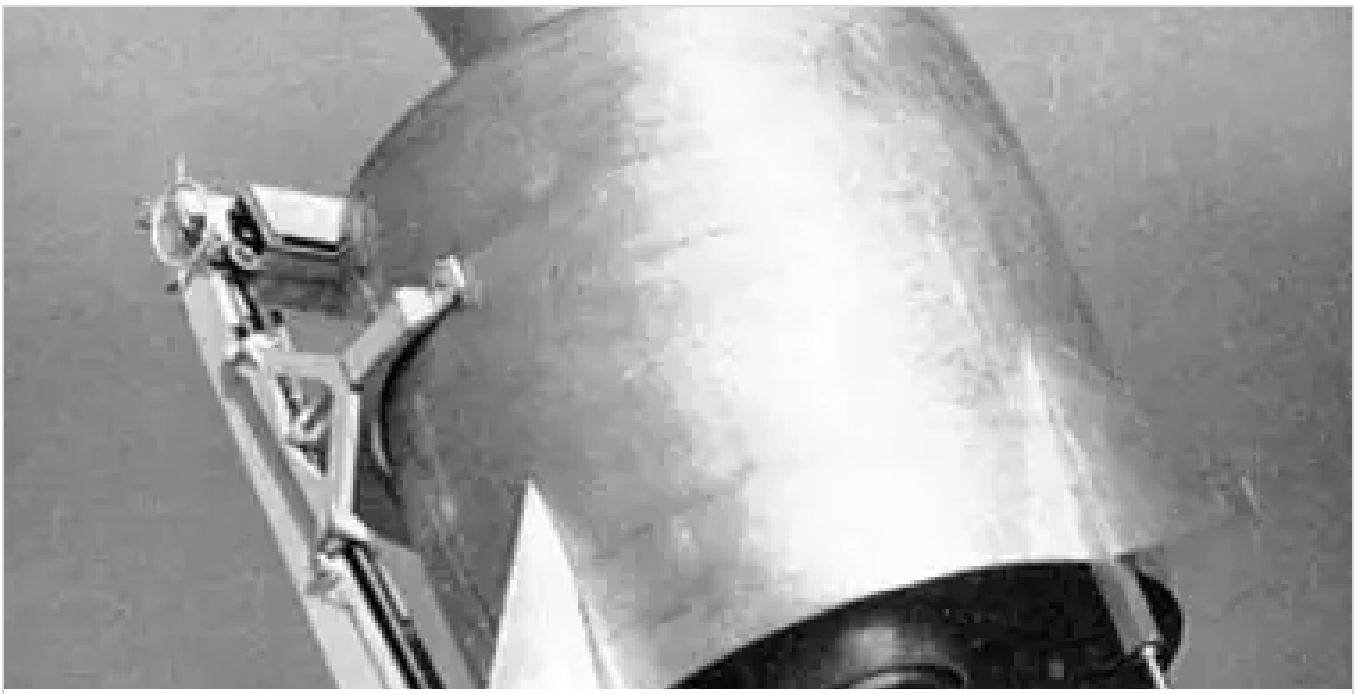
Korean Air Orders 103 Boeings in $36 Billion Bet

Related Posts



AVIATION WORLD

The Lopsided Genius: Blohm & Voss BV 141



AVIATION WORLD

The Coléoptère: France's Insane Annular-Wing VTOL Jet

HISTORY & LEGENDS

Pat Pattle: The Mystery Ace Who May Have Been Britain's Greatest Fighter Pilot

0 Comments