

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 16, 2020

Barbara M. Barrett
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force
Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Barrett,

We are following up on our letter to you dated 3 February 2020, to request reconsideration of the decision to remove the 152nd Airlift Wing (AW) at the Nevada Air National Guard Base in Reno, Nevada, as a candidate for the United States Air Force's recapitalization of eight C-130J aircraft. We continue to believe that the transfer of this aircraft would provide a necessary upgrade to the 152nd AW's C-130H fleet and provide support to the Nevada Air National Guard's vital firefighting mission, which was used most recently as part of the coordinated federal and state response to California's wildfires.

This year the Nevada Air National Guard was once again activated to assist with firefighting efforts across Southern and Northern California, Oregon, and Nevada. Two C-130 aircraft and support crew from the 152nd AW equipped with the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) deployed to Sacramento's McClellan Airport as a surge capacity to support wildfire suppression efforts in the state. In total, these aircraft flew 92 missions totaling over 109 hours flown on over 40 different fires across southern and northern California. This was not isolated support to California; the 152nd AW's MAFFS previously flew 48 sorties in California in 2017 in support of Fresno activities and 99 sorties in 2018 in support of Sacramento activities.

As part of our request that you reconsider the Nevada Air National Guard Base in the C-130J recapitalization decision, we would urge you to consider the use of MAFFS as part of your evaluation criteria. The MAFFS unit is a key part of the 152nd AW's mission, and an upgrade to new C-130J aircraft would greatly increase its performance flying MAFFS to fight similar deadly fires in the region. It would also improve interoperability and support for USFS, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), and the 146th Airlift Wing (AW) in the Channel Islands, which is currently the only MAFFS unit flying the C-130J aircraft.

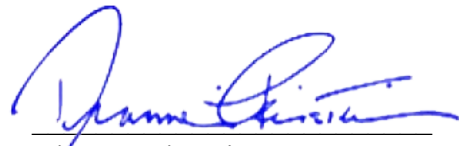
As devastating wildfires become more common occurrences in Nevada, California, and the western United States, we continue to believe in the importance of interoperability across these states to support future firefighting missions. Ensuring that the National Guard is ready to assist the response to these emergencies in a swift and effective manner should be a priority for the Air Force as it considers where to send the new aircraft. The 152nd AW has dispatched specially equipped aircraft to serve these missions in the past and is ready to improve its capabilities with C-130J aircraft.

We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator

CC: NV TAG