

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 3, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Barrett,

We write to request your consideration of the 152nd Airlift Wing (AW) at the Nevada Air National Guard Base in Reno, Nevada, for the United States Air Force's transfer of 8 C-130Js in accordance with the Defense Appropriations Acts of FY2017 through FY2019. The decision to upgrade the Nevada Air National Guard's C-130H fleet would have a substantial impact on the Nevada Air National Guard's readiness and firefighting capabilities in both Nevada and California.

Upgrading the 152nd AW's C-130H fleet to new C-130J aircraft would have many benefits for the areas where the Nevada Air National Guard operates; it would greatly increase performance in its Domestic Operations flying the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) in support of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), which it does in Nevada and in California. Nevada and California's collaboration on fighting deadly fires will continue through an upcoming agreement that would allow the governor of California to activate Nevada National Guard aircraft and crew in support of California state emergencies.

Transitioning to C-130J aircraft would improve interoperability with the 152nd AW support for USFS, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), and would also improve interoperability with the 146th Airlift Wing (AW) in Channel Islands, which is currently the only MAFFS unit flying the C-130J aircraft. The 152nd AW's MAFFS flew 48 sorties in California in 2017 in support of Fresno activities and 99 sorties in 2018 in support of Sacramento activities.

We were discouraged to hear that the Air Force is not considering MAFFS when evaluating candidate bases for the C-130J expansion. The MAFFS unit is a key part of the 152nd AW's mission and supports the Reno base's candidacy. Additionally, the Reno base already has recently completed new state-of-the-art facilities and constructed or remodeled eight buildings configured to support the C-130J model.

As devastating wildfires become more common occurrences in Nevada, California, and the western United States, it is critical to have support across states for these firefighting missions. Additionally, as the chief of the U.S. Forest Service Vicki Christiansen said this June, the threat of wildfire is no longer confined to a "fire season," but persistent and year round. Ensuring that

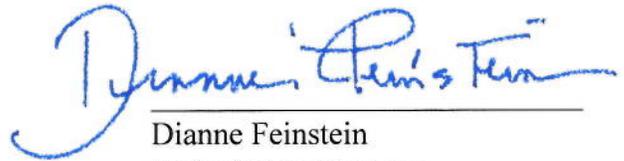
the National Guard is ready to assist the response to these emergencies in a swift and effective manner should be a priority for the Air Force as it considers where to send the new aircraft. The 152nd AW has dispatched specially equipped aircraft to serve these missions in the past and is ready to improve its capabilities with C-130J aircraft.

We appreciate your attention on this matter.

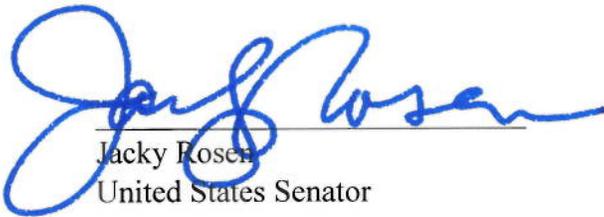
Sincerely,



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator