

United States Senate

June 8, 2021

Mr. John P. Roth
Acting Secretary of the Air Force
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Acting Secretary Roth,


We write to you today with concern regarding the ongoing delays in the transfer, modification, and delivery of seven Coast Guard HC-130H aircraft to the State of California for firefighting purposes, as required by the *John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019* (Public Law 115-232). We ask that you provide an updated delivery schedule for these aircraft and a description of any remaining concerns about the modifications and timely delivery of the aircraft.


We understand that there have been disruptions to the original schedule for transferring the seven C-130 air tankers to California resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, questions about the contract, and delays in conducting depot maintenance. We are especially concerned with any potential design issues that could prevent the aircraft from obtaining a firefighting capability.

These delays are especially troubling because of the crucial role air assets play in fighting California wildfires. So far this year, California has experienced 2,878 wildfires that have burned 16,800 acres, more than five times as much acreage as had burned at this point last year.

Given the severe wildfire season anticipated now and in future years, we urge you to expedite the Air Force's Congressionally-mandated retrofit of the aircraft. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator


Alex Padilla
United States Senator