

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 30, 2018

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary of Agriculture  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We write to strongly urge the Forest Service to continue operating two HC-130H firefighting aircraft in California through the end of the calendar year.

California is in the middle of another catastrophic fire year. In this year alone, wildfires have already burned 1.2 million acres and destroyed nearly 1,500 homes, and it is not even September. Air assets are a crucial part of not only stopping fires early, but they are vital to containing fires that have broken control. Therefore, we ask that you keep the current Modular Airborne Firefighting System-equipped aircraft in California and available for flying suppression missions for the rest of the calendar year.

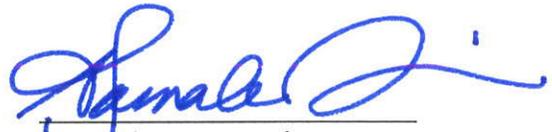
The *John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019* (Public Law 115-232) authorizes the transfer of seven HC-130H aircraft to the State of California for firefighting purposes. Two of these seven aircraft are currently in use in California by the Forest Service. While they will eventually be outfitted with a gravity retardant delivery system, there is no need to pull these two aircraft from California's front lines for many months. Instead, these aircraft should remain actively engaged in California as we approach the historically most active months of the fire year.

Given the continuing threat of catastrophic wildfires in California, we ask that you continue operating the two HC-130H aircraft in California to ensure that every asset is available to protect lives and property. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator