

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

October 19, 2020

The Honorable Barbara Barrett  
Secretary of the Air Force  
1665 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20330

Dear Secretary Barrett:

We write regarding the United States Air Force's plan for the C-130 fleet, including decisions on recapitalization of aircraft operated by the Air National Guard and the size of the overall fleet.

The Air National Guard performs approximately half of the Air Force's tactical airlift mission, and the C-130 is a critical part of that effort. The tactical airlift mission ensures safe and effective transportation of service members, equipment, and supplies both within the United States and overseas, including in support of combat operations. The 133rd Airlift Wing, stationed at the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport and serving the entire state including the Duluth Air National Guard Base, provides airlift to support humanitarian and disaster relief missions, such as the coronavirus (COVID-19) response. The 133<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing has also repeatedly deployed overseas in support of U.S. operations around the globe.

We are concerned that the Air Force is considering reductions in the size of the fleet in ways that could impact readiness and mission capability—particularly for the Air National Guard. For Fiscal Year 2021, the Air Force proposed to reduce the fleet from 300 to 287, with the reduction of 13 aircraft all coming from the Air National Guard. Furthermore, it is our understanding that the Air Force, using a future Mobility Capabilities Requirement Study, is planning to reduce the C-130 fleet to 255 aircraft.

We are also concerned that the current criteria for making decisions regarding recapitalization could have a disproportionately negative impact for high performing units like the Minnesota Air National Guard. We believe recapitalization decisions must be decided using updated criteria that are based on the best solution for operational needs and the most efficient use of taxpayer dollars—and should include consideration not only of factors like military construction, the need for spare parts and ground equipment, but also, effective manning, pilot recruitment and retention, mission capability and readiness, and ancillary mission sets such as the Aeromedical Evacuation and Contingency Response.

It is important that any reduction in these crucial capabilities be made as part of a thorough decision making process and assessment of future needs. We therefore request that the Air Force provide Congress the following information:

1. Please provide justification, including the level of risk the Air Force is taking and where they are taking it, for reducing the C-130 fleet to 255 aircraft.
2. Please provide a breakdown and explanation of the criteria that will be used for recapitalization of the C-130 fleet under a long-term management plan.
3. Please describe how the Air Force considers the Air National Guard's unique Domestic Operations mission when evaluating target fleet strength.

4. We understand there will be a reconsideration of the criteria for the decision of which units will convert from the C-130H to the C-130J. Please describe the process that will be used to ensure a fair and transparent reevaluation of all C-130 units.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator



Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



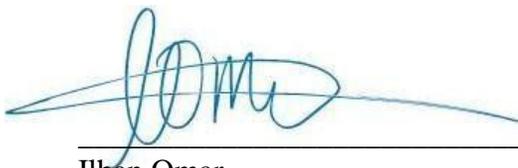
Tom Emmer  
Member of Congress



Collin Peterson  
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar  
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Jim Hagedorn  
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Angie Craig  
Member of Congress



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