



File Code: 6140-3-2

Date: May 4, 2010

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Madam Chairman:

In the Conference Report 111-316, for H.R. 2996, Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010, Congress required the U.S. Forest Service to provide a copy of “its report of airtanker needs, including an estimate of replacement costs.”

Enclosed please find a report by the National Interagency Aviation Council (NIAC) titled “Interagency Aviation Strategy, July 2008.” This report was prepared by NIAC with input and participation from representatives from various State and Federal agencies. It represents the most recent expression of wildland fire aviation needs written and deliberated by the larger wildland fire community. As this report was completed some years ago, it does not capture the entirety of the current Administration’s position. While we recognize that some of the data in the report is outdated, and therefore affecting the foundation of some of its projections, we believe it is important to deliver to Congress as it will serve to facilitate further needed dialogue regarding the future of the large airtanker fleet.

We look forward to continuing the conversation with Congress, our partners in the wildland fire community, and other stakeholders. We collectively and strategically need to provide the best possible and most efficient mix of fire aviation resources, enabling us to make risk-informed decisions to protect communities and forest resources in this country. In the meantime, we are confident that our current mix of aviation resources has us prepared to meet the upcoming fire season.

A similar letter is being sent to Senator Lamar Alexander, Congressmen James P. Moran, and Michael K. Simpson.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Hank Kashdan*  
THOMAS L. TIDWELL  
Chief

Enclosure

