

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 29, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hagel:

We are troubled by recent news that the Air Force is weighing whether to eliminate its entire KC-10 fleet. We urge you to take off the table this option that would be so detrimental to the strategic capabilities of our military around the world.

We respect that difficult decisions must be made to maintain mission capability within the current fiscal constraints. However, we strongly oppose the divestiture of the KC-10 to meet budget targets. Our nation's aerial refueling capability is too strategically important to risk.


If the KC-10 were to be retired, the Air Force would be left with only the aging KC-135 to conduct refueling missions until the delivery of the KC-46. Under that scenario, any structural or mechanical problem discovered on a KC-135 could ground the entire refueling fleet leaving our military and the nation quite vulnerable.

The KC-10 is an aircraft with decades of service life remaining and an ongoing integral role to play in our national defense interests. We look forward to productive conversations with you and your staff as you complete budget process and plans for FY 2015 and beyond.


Sincerely,



JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress



JON RUNYAN
Member of Congress



MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress



ROBERT E. ANDREWS
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress



FRANK LOBIONDO
Member of Congress



LEONARD LANCE
Member of Congress



GEORGE MILLER
Member of Congress