

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 9, 2014

The Honorable Deborah Lee James
Secretary of the Air Force
Office of the Secretary of the Air Force
1160 Airforce Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Secretary James:

The recent Senate Armed Services Committee Fiscal Year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act requires a study of one of the Air Force's legacy training aircraft, the T-1A Jayhawk, to determine whether it is prudent to continue to modernize the T-1A or replace it altogether. With pending avionics upgrades to the T-1A that some estimate could cost hundreds of millions of dollars in order to be certified to fly in the national airspace in the coming years, we feel that this study should not be delayed and should instead begin as soon as practicable.

Recently, we learned that the cost per flying hour of the T-1A may have increased considerably since 2012. We are concerned that the rising costs to fly and maintain legacy T-1A aircraft may not justify the added expense to upgrade the avionics and potentially perform a future Service Life Extension Program. Additionally, we have been told that the Life Cycle Cost to keep the T-1A in the Air Force inventory through 2034 could exceed \$14 billion.

We are also aware that the Air Force has performed market research in the past few years to determine the potential efficiencies associated with utilizing a new Very Light Jet (VLJ) class of aircraft to replace the aging T-1A. We understand the VLJ aircraft could provide significant Life Cycle Cost savings, some estimate as high as \$10-12 billion, plus provide the Air Force immediate savings in the Future Years Defense Plan by averting an avionics upgrade for the T-1A.

In light of the current budget pressures and the fiscal constraints that all of the Services face, we urge you to consider conducting the T-1A modernization or replacement study immediately. The savings could be significant, thus allowing money to be reprogrammed for higher priority needs.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our country.

Sincerely,



Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator

Handwritten signature or name, possibly "Von Ubar".

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