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June 7, 2006

Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon, Room 4E941
Washington DC 20330-1670

Dear Mr. Secretary,

It has been brought to my attention that Colorado's wildfire aviation preparedness has been reduced for the 2006 fire season due to the deployment of Colorado National Guard helicopters. In past fire seasons, these helicopters have been used as backup firefighting resources in Colorado.

I have been working to increase funding to remove hazardous fuels from our forests *before* fires occur. However, if fires do occur this season, the availability of the Air Force and Air Force Reserve to assist our firefighting efforts will become an issue of urgent, and possibly life-or-death, importance. I respectfully request that you provide my office with responses to the following pressing questions as soon as possible.

- What Colorado based Air Force and Air Force Reserve aircraft and crews are equipped and available to respond to Colorado wildfires?
- What limitations exist regarding the Air Force and Air Force Reserve's ability to respond to calls for help in Colorado?
- Would fighting wildfires prove useful training for Air Force and Air Force Reserve members who work in a firefighting capacity? In the case of the Air Force Reserve, would reservists be able to count fighting wildfires as Inactive Duty Training? Finally, if fighting fires is in fact valuable training to these forces, can the jet fuel used for fighting any such wildfires be paid for with money used for training flights?

I look forward to learning what role the Air Force and Air Force Reserve can play during this dangerous wildfire season in Colorado.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar
United States Senator