

**Letter from the Blue Ribbon Panel on Aerial Wildland Firefighting to the Public**

Recently, the Chief of the Forest Service and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management commissioned us as an independent Blue Ribbon Panel on Aerial Wildland Firefighting to identify facts and key issues related to safety and operational performance. The scope of the review is broad and includes fixed wing and helicopter operations, government and contractor operations and maintenance, and management oversight. We have been specifically asked to look into the five key areas of the current system: safety, operational effectiveness, costs, sustainability, and strategic guidance.

We are seeking your input and it is critical we receive your ideas by October 25, 2002. You may respond electronically to aviation@fs.fed.us, via facsimile to 801-517-1021, or in hard copy to the address below.

Aerial Wildland Firefighting Panel  
USDA FS Content Analysis Team  
P.O. Box 221150  
Salt Lake City, UT 84116

We have also scheduled six town hall meetings across the country over the next 60 days and we would welcome your personal input at that time. The location and dates of these meetings are as follows:

- September 25            ATLANTA – Regional Town Meeting (8:30-4:30)  
Hyatt Regency Atlanta 265 Peachtree St N.E.
- October 7                PORTLAND - Regional Town Meeting (8:30-4:30)  
Embassy Suites Hotel Airport 7900 NE 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue
- October 9                SALT LAKE CITY - Regional Town Meeting (8:30-4:30)  
Marriott City Center 2220 S. State Street
- October 10              DENVER - Regional Town Meeting (8:30-4:30)  
Sheraton Denver West 360 Union Boulevard
- October 22              ALBUQUERQUE - Regional Town Meeting (8:30-4:30)  
Wyndham Airport Hotel 2910 Yale Boulevard S.E.
- October 24              SACRAMENTO Regional Town Meeting (8:30-4:30)  
Hyatt Regency Sacramento at Capitol Park 1209 L Street

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The current massive wildfire season and alarming aircraft accidents underscore the urgency of our task. With your assistance, we can ensure the nation is better prepared to manage future wildland fires and save aircrew lives.

Signed:

Jim Hall, (co-chair) Former Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board

Jim Hull, (co-chair) State Forester, Texas

Ken Johnson, Former Executive Director, Transportation Safety Board (Canada)

Earl McKinney, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Bowling Green State University

Bill Scott, Rocky Mountain Bureau Chief, Aviation Week and Space Technology