

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3204

February 28, 2007

The Honorable Michael W. Wynne
Secretary
United States Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In light of the recent decision by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to uphold the protest of the Air Force's November 9, 2006, CSAR-X contract award, I write to ask the Air Force to take a thorough approach in the re-bid and evaluation of new CSAR-X proposals. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I fully understand the urgency in replacing the aging HH-60G fleet, but we also need to ensure that we field an aircraft that has the right size and capabilities to effectively perform the CSAR mission. Therefore, I am very concerned by recent news articles which quote the Air Force as stating it can comply with the intent of the GAO recommendations more "narrowly." It is important that the GAO decision is followed and that the bidding is reopened.

I urge the Air Force to develop a set of requirements that truly reflect the rescue crew's needs in a combat search and rescue aircraft and the requisite capabilities for this type of mission. I also request that the Air Force conduct an evaluation that ensures important factors are evaluated in the decision such as how well a proposed solution operates in environments where our service personnel are most likely to need rescue support. I support the CSAR-X program, and believe that a thorough re-bid is essential to ensuring that the right helicopter is selected for the Air Force and our men and women in uniform.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to reviewing the Air Force's re-bid and re-evaluation plans for the CSAR-X program. Please let me know if I can be of assistance in supporting the CSAR-X program.

Sincerely yours,

Hillary Rodham Clinton