

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 21, 2011

Gen. Craig R. McKinley  
Chief  
U.S. National Guard Bureau  
111 S. George Mason Dr.  
Arlington, VA 22204

Dear General McKinley:

Three years ago a small US Army test program was initiated to determine if military airdrops were feasible for extinguishing wildfires. This concept, named Precision Container Aerial Delivery Systems (PCADS), has proven that U.S. military cargo aircraft can accurately airdrop water or agent on wildfires, day or night.

With an aging air tanker fleet and limited budgets, the USDA Forest Service and State fire agencies should look at PCADS as an affordable technology to extinguish wildfires. The technology should not only be viewed as complementary to traditional firefighting methods, but in many cases, an alternative, cost-saving method.

The US Army Research Development & Engineering Center has managed development and testing of PCADS. This testing was completed earlier this month in Coolidge, AZ. Now, PCADS is ripe for a transition into operational testing—a phase that will be managed by the U.S. Army. The evaluation of this technology would be conducted in conjunction with ANG's Advanced Airlift Tactics Training Center (AATC).

PCADS operational testing would include:

- 1) Air National Guard aerial firefighting PCADS strategy and tactics development
- 2) USDA Forest Service PCADS certification (grid) testing using ANG aircraft

The estimated cost of PCADS operational testing is \$2.58 million, which will include live fire testing that will determine its value in combating wildfires.

Understanding that the Department of Defense already has the authority to proceed with operational testing, we respectfully request that \$2.58 million of 2011 DoD RDT&E funds be allocated for this purpose. These funds could be transferred to US Army Research Development & Engineering Center for managing operational testing of PCADS.

We hope that you will see merit in PCADS aerial firefighting technology and work with us to ensure that PCADS obtains operational testing. If needed, we are more than happy to meet with you to discuss a plan to move forward. Budgets are tight, but we believe these test funds will be well spent in determining the true value of airdropping on wildfires.

Upon completion of operational testing, the funding of PCADS will become the responsibility of the USDA Forest Service. With your help, we hope that it will become a valuable tool for use by the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve in combating wildfires.

The goal of PCADS is not to turn aerial firefighting into a primary Air National Guard mission; rather, the goal of PCADS is to provide the Air National Guard with a tool that when asked, can extinguish wildfires more efficiently and cost-effectively.

Sincerely,



Dana Rohrabacher  
Member of Congress



Trent Franks  
Member of Congress