

\* Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Chairman, it is fortuitous now that I rise for the purpose of entering into a colloquy with the gentleman from Florida on an issue that deals directly with the C-17, I might add.

I rise today to voice my concern over recent and devastating wildfires that have enveloped massive amounts of land throughout our country. The ruin caused by these wildfires has consumed 2.1 million acres, destroyed over 1,600 homes, killed 7 people, and threatened many more. This recurring problem, caused by dry conditions, hot weather, and ample fuel, tests the limits of our current Federal, State, and local firefighting resources.

When homes and lives are on the line, I believe we should take all possible action to protect lives and property, including the deployment of Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve resources when appropriate. We oftentimes think of the Department of Defense as an entity that should be aimed at defending our Nation from foes abroad, but the fact is that there are enormous resources held by the Department of Defense, such as cargo planes that are capable of assisting in many other efforts, including firefighting efforts, which threaten the lives and property of our people.

For example, one specific concept, named the Precision Container Aerial Delivery System, or PCADS, needs only an additional \$2.6 million in funding to complete its already years-long evaluation of this technology. Unfortunately, however, DOD has not committed this meager sum to finish evaluating PCADS, despite the authority to do so.

What are PCADS? They essentially allow any military cargo plane that has a ramp in the back—mainly, our C-17s and our C-130s—to assist in wildfire efforts without having to modify the airplane at all. This means the C-17s and the C-130s, of which we have right now many stationed all over the country, could be deployed to help extinguish wildfires at a relatively low cost, creating a new and enormous firefighting capability. As I say, it's at a minimal cost.

Basically what we're talking about is a huge container system in the back that is made out of cardboard and a water balloon, which will permit putting them onto the C-17s and the C-130s to rolling right on 1,000 pounds of water per container. These C-130 pilots and C-17 pilots are already trained to drop these things, and without modifying the airplane, they could become an enormous resource to fighting fires throughout our country without adding any extra cost after this \$2.6 million for the final test.

I, therefore, have one simple request: to the extent that the Department of

Defense is capable of exploring new, innovative, cost-effective, and promising firefighting technologies that can be used for our civilian population, but especially for the firefighting capabilities that can aid in support, as I say, firemen's requests throughout our country and from the State and Federal level, I urge the Department of Defense to do so to the degree that it can.

I now yield to the distinguished chairman, the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from California for bringing this to our attention and for supporting innovative and cost-effective ways for our government to protect our people and their possessions from wildfires. I, too, believe the Department of Defense should seriously consider promising and cost-effective firefighting technologies where appropriate.

Mr. DICKS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Yes, I yield to the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. DICKS. This has been a subject I've been very interested in as former chairman of the Interior Appropriation Subcommittee where we have to fund the efforts for firefighting, which are very massive.

I have tried to work with the Defense Department. The biggest problem we face is that OMB, when you want to lease these airplanes—we're looking mainly at the C-130J here—lease them for firefighting purposes and then have them deployed with the National Guard in California or somewhere on the west coast, you get into the fact that if you try to lease them, the budget control people want to put the whole burden on the first year. This is why leasing has become difficult. We've got to work out a way to get these airplanes.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman from California has expired.

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Washington is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DICKS. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. In the past, in order to achieve the goal that you have outlined, we needed to reconfigure the inside of these C-130s and have special C-130s deployed.

This new PCAD system, which we can roll on enormous amounts of water in these little container systems, which is 1,000 pounds of water per container, can be dropped without reconfiguring the C-130s or the C-17s.

Mr. DICKS. I'm very interested in this, and I want to talk to my good friend about this. I would like to work with you on it.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I have one last note. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DICKS. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. There's been a series of tests to show this is very effective. One more series of tests will

cost \$2.6 million and can deploy these. I believe it will increase the value of our C-130s and C-17s to the point that we can actually maybe charge a little bit more money when we sell the C-17s, which will be far more than the \$2.6 million for this final test. It will pay for itself, not to mention the property damage that we can protect against.

Mr. DICKS. I look forward to working with the gentleman on this issue, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. RICHARDSON. I would like to engage in a colloquy.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank Chairman YOUNG and Ranking Member DICKS for including language in the conference report that recognizes the importance of increasing the fair opportunity for numbers of women and minorities in officer positions and within the Special Operations Forces.

Minorities and women to have an opportunity to fairly compete—and I stress, "compete"—are often underrepresented in the leadership ranks within our Armed Services. African Americans account for 12 percent of the U.S. population but represent just 8 percent of Active Duty officers. Likewise, when it comes to Hispanic Americans, it's even worse. Hispanics make up 15 percent of the U.S. population but number only 5 percent of the officer corps.

While the number of women in officer positions has seen increases, there is still a lack of women in top officer positions. In 2009, there were 40 individuals who held the highest rank in our Armed Services.

Mr. Chairman, do you know how many of those were women? I'm sad to say, just 1 out of 40. This shows that there is considerable room for improvement.

Having served on the Transportation Committee with Mr. CUMMINGS, much work was done on the Coast Guard side, but really should be equalled throughout the Armed Forces.

I was planning on offering an amendment to the Defense appropriations bill that would make it explicit that it is the sense of Congress that efforts should be made to increase the number of women and minorities in officer positions, but it would be subject to a point of order. However, I've worked with Chairman YOUNG and his staff that going forward we would continue to look at ways to increase women and minorities within the leadership ranks and to give them an opportunity again to compete for fair positions.

Chairman YOUNG, will you continue to work with me on this very important issue?

And I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and I thank her for calling attention to the fact that the subcommittee in our report said