The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Chair  
House Armed Services Committee  
2120 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chair  
House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
H-405, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee  
2120 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky  
Ranking Member  
House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

After nearly 40 years, the United States Air Force is on the brink of receiving a new aerial refueling tanker — the KC-46A Pegasus. This is a welcomed development for the Nation’s warfighters, and we ask for your support in the Fiscal Year 2019 defense bills.

As you know, the Air Force is replacing the current tanker fleet of Eisenhower-era KC-135s and Reagan-era KC-10s. These aircraft have been the cornerstone of the refueling mission, but the advanced age of the KC-135s has begun to undermine the fleet’s readiness and availability. The Air Force requires the multifunctional capability that the KC-46A will offer. The new platform will provide aerial refueling to U.S. and coalition aircraft via a more modern refueling boom and hose and drogue systems. It will bring the latest tools to detect, avoid, defeat and survive threats, and it can deploy worldwide in any operational environment, designed to transport not just fuel but cargo, passengers, and patients while performing aeromedical evacuation missions.

As the Committees consider annual authorization and appropriations, we respectfully urge you to support the procurement of 18 tankers. The defense Committees have been a steward of taxpayer funding during this program’s development under a fixed price contract. The Committees can support the Air Force even further by maintaining steady procurement in this fiscal year.

Our nation’s tanker fleet is the cornerstone of any operation that requires aerial assets. However, the current, aging fleet is in dire need of both new and additional assets, and we ask for your continued strong support for KC-46A tankers in the Fiscal Year 2019 Defense Authorization and Appropriations bills. We look forward to working with you throughout the year on this issue of national security. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,  

Ron Estes
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress
Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

Glenn "GT" Thompson  
Member of Congress

Salud O. Carbajal  
Member of Congress