

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 18, 2017

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen, Chairman
The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey,

As you prepare for the conference negotiations with your Senate counterparts over the Fiscal Year 2018 Defense Appropriations bill, we write to you to respectfully urge you to support the House position on a critical defense research and development priority.

We are asking you to strongly support the House position and add \$10M to Army RDT&E Line 31, Aviation Advanced Technology (PE 0603003A) for Future Vertical Lift that the House included in its FY18 Defense Appropriations bill. The Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee added \$5M to this same budget line for “rotary wing development” in its draft report released in November.

Like both of you, we are strong supporters of Army Aviation and of America’s rotorcraft industry. In recent U.S. military deployments, vertical lift aircraft have been some of the most effective workhorses in the American fighting arsenal. At the same time, insufficient investment in vertical lift technology over a sustained period threatens the long-term performance, maintainability, survivability and affordability of the entire U.S. rotorcraft fleet. In the decade following 9-11, for example, the U.S. military lost more than 600 Americans and 400 vertical lift aircraft to hostile action and mishaps. With the exception of the V-22 Osprey, all U.S. rotorcraft deployed in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan were designed during or before Vietnam.

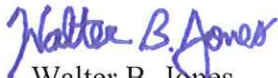
Pursuant to Congressional direction in the FY09 National Defense Authorization Act, DOD delivered its Future Vertical Lift (FVL) Strategic Plan to Congress in 2012. FVL is a joint initiative, with support from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Special Operations Command and Coast Guard. The FVL Initial Capabilities Document calls for increased speed, range, payload, survivability, and affordability.

Additional funding is needed to deliver these revolutionary capabilities to our warfighters, and regain America’s world leadership in rotorcraft innovation. The next generation FVL aircraft will be the centerpiece of the US military vertical lift aircraft for the next 50 years. Additional funding is required for a comprehensive R&D program that encompasses a full-range of technical advancements to inform the ongoing FVL Analysis of Alternatives – including next-generation rotors, drive trains, engines, flight controls, sensors and survivability.

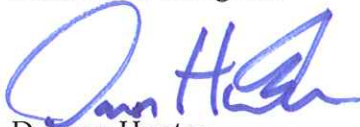
Thanks to your leadership, Congress showed its support for robust FVL funding by adding \$14M for Future Vertical Lift in FY15, \$10M in FY16, and \$11M in FY17.

We respectfully ask you to strongly support the House position, and include the full \$10M in additional funding for Army RDT&E Line 31, Aviation Advanced Technology (PE 0603003A) for Future Vertical Lift in the final Conference Report for the FY18 defense appropriations bill. We would also urge your consideration of FVL should any additional funds become available.

Sincerely,



Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress



Ryan A. Costello
Member of Congress



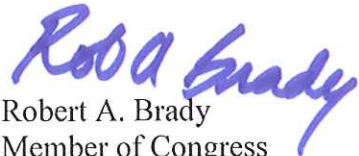
Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress



Lou Barletta
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Scott Perry
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Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress



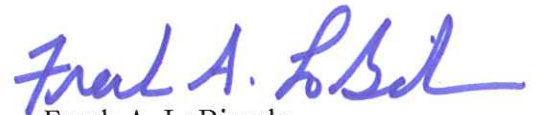
Paul Cook
Member of Congress



Mo Brooks
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Donald Norcross
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