

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

March 25, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1300 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Secretary Hagel,

We write today regarding the United States Air Force's (USAF) Light Air Support (LAS) contract award to Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC) and its partner, Embraer Defense and Security (Embraer).

It is our strong opinion that the Air Force's decision to select the SNC/Embraer team was well founded and should be upheld without additional delays. We understand that the contract award was for delivery of training, logistics support and operations stand-up and that the Air Force rated the A-29 Super Tucano as the best overall value based on mission capability, past performance and pricing. These factors will ensure the nearest-term and most cost effective means to providing a low-risk, proven close air support aircraft to combat troops in Afghanistan. It is evident that the Air Force conducted a thorough review of the two offerings for this critical program and made an appropriate decision that has been validated by the Government Accountability Office and a review by the Air Force following the original contract award.

We understand SNC's proposal will support over 100 domestic parts suppliers and over 1,400 American jobs in more than 20 states. It has also been made clear that SNC and Embraer are planning on creating hundreds of new jobs in Colorado and Florida and that they are ready to begin producing the A-29 immediately. SNC and Embraer have continually expanded their U.S. locations and workforce, and we have been assured that both companies are committed to American aviation manufacturing and investing in U.S. jobs.

As we understand it, the Air Force's choice of the SNC bid was largely premised on the overall low risk approach, technical competence and proven track record of the A-29. We believe these factors to be completely appropriate given the operational history of the combat-proven A-29. Despite the LAS delivery delay caused by an earlier, unsuccessful bid protest by a losing competitor, we are gratified that the SNC/Embraer team are working quickly to meet the urgent operational needs of the Afghan National Security Forces, and we hope that any protests of the Air Force's selection will not further delay delivery of the A-29.

It is our understanding that the LAS award provides an initial delivery order, worth \$427.5 million, to deliver 20 airplanes, associated training, logistics and maintenance and base infrastructure to Afghanistan under the Building Partnership Capacity Program (BPC). It also establishes a program of record for providing like capabilities for all 27 allied nations in the

BPC. This program provides an opportunity for possible expansion of A-29 production in the United States and for increasing U.S. contract support to many more allies and partners around the world. In SNC/Embraer, the Air Force has selected a team that will continue to help build true partnership capabilities.

Congratulations on a well-conducted and thorough contracting effort that will most effectively protect our troops and allies in Afghanistan, create new jobs in America, support the aviation industrial base, aid our partner nations and provide greatest value to the taxpayer.

Sincerely,



Mark E. Udall  
U.S. Senator



Michael F. Bennett  
U.S. Senator



Mike Coffman  
U.S. Representative