October 13, 2016

The Honorable Harold Rogers, 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 Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey,

As you prepare for the conference negotiations with your Senate counterparts over the Fiscal Year 2017 Defense Appropriations bill, we write to you to respectfully urge you to support the House position on a critical defense R&D priority.

We are asking you to strongly support the House position and add $11M to Army RDT&E Line 31, Aviation Advanced Technology (PE 0603003A) for Future Vertical Lift.

Like both of you, we are strong supporters of Army Aviation and of America’s rotorcraft industry. The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown that vertical lift aircraft have been some of the most effective workhorses in the U.S. 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 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 Army Aviation research and development (R&D) 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. FY17 is a critical year for the technology development, as wind tunnel testing and other key milestones must be met that will help inform the FVL Analysis of Alternatives. Additional funding is required to meet this aggressive timeline with a
comprehensive R&D program that encompasses a full-range of technical advancements—including next-generation rotors, drive trains, engines, flight controls, sensors and survivability.

Thanks to both of yours leadership, Congress showed its support for robust FVL funding by adding $14M for Future Vertical Lift in FY15 and $10M in FY16.

We were pleased the House supported an additional $11M in funding for Future Vertical Lift in its version of the FY17 defense appropriations bill. As you may know, the Senate did not add any new funds for FVL in its version.

We very respectfully ask you to strongly support the House position, and include the full $11M 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 FY17 defense appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress

Mimi Walters
Member of Congress

Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

Duncan D. Hunter, Jr.
Member of Congress

James A. Himes
Member of Congress

Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

Richard Hudson
Member of Congress

Mark Walker
Member of Congress

Tim Murphy
Member of Congress

Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson, Jr.
Member of Congress
Patrick L. Meehan  
Member of Congress  

Ryan A. Costello  
Member of Congress  

Tom Marino  
Member of Congress  

Mike F. Doyle, Jr.  
Member of Congress  

Mo Brooks  
Member of Congress  

Lou Barletta  
Member of Congress  

Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress  

Donald W. Norcross  
Member of Congress  

Elizabeth H. Esty  
Member of Congress  

Blake Farenthold  
Member of Congress
October 14, 2016

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Sincerely,

Joseph R. Pitts  
Member of Congress

Pete Olson  
Member of Congress

Tom MacArthur  
Member of Congress