

From: [WOODWARD, PAUL A GS-12 USAF PACAF 673 CES/CEANO](#)
To: [Doniece Gott](#)
Subject: FW: Funding Public Safety
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2015 9:55:28 AM

Dear Ms. Gott,

I would like to make comments for the hearing today on Public Safety. It is my understanding the the Department of Public Safety's Aviation Wing may undergo substantial budget cuts. I am very concerned as a private pilot and avid outdoor enthusiast that the Aviation Unit, specifically Helo 1 and 2, may be grounded because of budgetary constraints. In Sept of 2012, I was trapped on the Talkeetna River during the flooding that occurred due to early snow and then unseasonably warm weather. My aircraft and camp site were swept away by flood water in the middle of the night leaving me and two friends stranded in the flood water and very hypothermic. We used our satellite phone to communicate with the Rescue Coordination Center. The Military tried several times through the night to rescue us but were unsuccessful because of bad weather in the route they had chosen. But the Public Safety Helo 1 piloted by Mel Nading was able to fly an alternate route that the Military hadn't considered and found us. I was so hypothermic when he arrived that I was hallucinating and very near my end.

My point is that the Military, as incredibly skilled as they are, are not as familiar with the local geography as our Public Safety pilots who have much more experience with our back country. Military pilots rotate frequently and just don't have the familiarity with the country. Military pilots and aircraft are also subject to immediate deployments which would jeopardize public safety if we solely depend on them. You cannot replace the capabilities of the Public Safety Astar A-350s with the Public Safety Robinson R-44 helicopter. The R-44 doesn't have as good a service ceiling or load capacity as the Astar A-350. Had Public Safety been flying the R-44 that night on the Talkeetna, given the altitude and the load of three very wet passengers, they would have likely left one of us there and risked a second flight in nearly impossible conditions.

I can't emphasize enough how incredibly vital the Public Safety Astar Helicopters are to the citizens and law enforcement of Alaska and believe it is one of the last places we should be looking to cut in these tough economic time.

Thanks for your consideration

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