

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 5, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Jeffries, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McConnell:

As you continue to work on a bipartisan emergency disaster relief supplemental package, we urge your support for the inclusion of the funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) aircraft recapitalization efforts. This need was requested in the Administration's recent emergency disaster supplemental funding request.

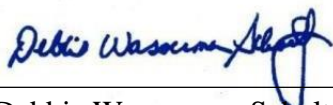
This critical funding would allow NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) to complete construction of two fully equipped hurricane hunter aircraft already underway and to procure a third plane. These aircraft are vital for NOAA's hurricane and extreme weather forecasting capabilities, ensuring accurate and timely information that saves lives and protects communities during severe weather events.

The funding would help address the imminent need to replace NOAA's aging WP-3D Orion hurricane hunter planes, which are expected to retire by 2030 after decades of service. Without these replacements, NOAA risks losing its ability to perform life-saving data collection and forecasting for hurricanes and other extreme weather events.

With the recent devastating increase of hurricanes, a lapse in the critical and unique storm data and observations provided for by these fleet of aircraft would pose challenging issues for our nation's hurricane readiness. Investing in NOAA's fleet now ensures the continuation and expansion of critical capabilities such as: real-time data to improve hurricane forecasts, as seen with Hurricanes Milton and Helene, in addition to improving water resource planning, and fire weather, flood and drought predictions.

We urge you to prioritize this investment in NOAA's aircraft recapitalization in the upcoming legislation. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



C. Scott Franklin
Member of Congress



Darren Sotro
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



Maxwell Frost
Member of Congress



Neal Dunn
Member of Congress



Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



John Rutherford
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



Laurel Lee
Member of Congress



Carlos A. Gimenez
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress