

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 20, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Army Network Modernization programs. The Network is the Army's foremost investment priority because it complements our vision of an Army that is technologically advanced and operationally effective while being leaner, agile, and ready. The Army has identified the Network as its "foremost investment priority." in fiscal year 2014 and Network Modernization programs will provide our soldiers with modern, capable, and flexible communications – specifically the Warfighter Information Network – Tactical (WIN-T) and the Handheld, Manpack, Small Form Fit (HMS) radio. A soldier's communications gear can be just as important as body armor and rifles in combat, providing the situational awareness necessary to increase combat effectiveness, reduce civilian casualties, and prevent friendly-fire tragedies.

During Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom, the pace of each conflict outran our force's ability to communicate. Even today, many troops still operate on analog radio technology from the early 1980's. At home, civilians have access to broadband Internet through mobile devices. While on the move, they can access maps, data, and voice at the tap of a screen or the push of a button. In contrast, most of our soldiers in theater do not benefit from these technologies. If equipped with WIN-T and HMS, then they will.

While we do not know what the next conflict or humanitarian mission will be, we do know that our soldiers will need flexible and effective communications equipment. WIN-T and HMS represent technology and acquisition success stories. HMS, for example has two qualified vendors, building an open-architecture radio using only government-owned waveforms. The dual manufacturing strategy – having two vendors produce identical radios during the initial states of full-rate production – ensures that competition and flexibility are built into the program and maximizes the long-term affordability benefits. This strategy further allows the Army to leverage the significant investments it has already made in open, non-propriety waveforms, thus ensuring capability for soldiers and value for taxpayers for years to come.


We understand the significant pressure being placed on the budget of the Army due, in part, to the severe budget cuts imposed by sequestration. Nonetheless, WIN-T and HMS cannot sustain additional cuts – including cuts to reprogramming. As Army Chief of Staff General Raymond T.

Odierno made clear on August 7, 2012, the Network “. . . remains [the Army’s] number one modernization priority . . . giving our commanders and soldiers vastly increased ability to communicate and share information on the battlefield . . . while on the move and in the midst of ongoing operations.” We urge you to ensure that these programs remain on track to meet the Army Network Modernization acquisition goals and provide these critical capabilities to our men and women in uniform.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
Senator



William M. Cowan
Senator