

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 2, 2023

The Honorable Frank Kendall
Secretary of the Air Force
Department of the Air Force
1690 Air Force Pentagon 1636
Washington, D.C. 20330

General Daniel R. Hokanson, USA
Chief of the National Guard Bureau
Office of the Chief, National Guard Bureau
Defense Pentagon, Room 2E630
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Kendall and General Hokanson,

We write regarding the pressing need to provide the New Hampshire Air National Guard's 157th Air Refueling Wing (ARW) Fire and Emergency Services (FES) Department located at Pease Air National Guard Base on Portsmouth International Airport in New Hampshire with a sufficient inventory of modern and reliable Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) vehicles.

Pease Air National Guard Base (ANGB) provides critical military refueling capabilities with its fleet of twelve KC-46A aircraft and is a geographically strategic air base for transatlantic operations. Moreover, it supports economically vital commercial and civilian entities operating at the international airport. However, the vitality of the base is nullified without the availability of critical firefighting services to support operations. Ensuring Pease has appropriate and reliable firefighting assets to protect individuals and avoid disruptions to both military and civilian operations is imperative.

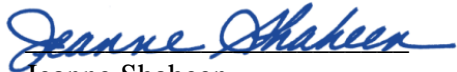
Regrettably, Portsmouth International Airport and Pease ANGB were recently forced to halt operations after the ARFF trucks required to meet minimal service for both FAA and military services became unavailable due to mechanical breakdowns. Several of the 157th ARW trucks have been declared unserviceable for well over two years, forcing Pease to borrow equally dilapidated and aging ARFF trucks, some of which also became unexpectedly unserviceable. Subsequently, 157th ARW was forced to locate, secure, and locally pay for a civilian rental truck to resume safe operations at the airport.

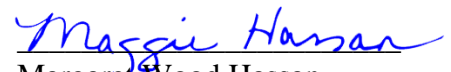
When Pease is forced to rely on an aging fleet of fire trucks, the safety of airport employees and the 157th ARW is put at risk; and the nation loses strategically vital resources at a time in which we are confronted with numerous global threats.


Pease has undertaken efforts to repair broken fire trucks and ensure operations by obtaining loaner and rental fire trucks, but these efforts are unsustainable. We understand Pease is scheduled to recapitalize a 1994-era P-23 fire truck, which has been unusable since May 2021, with a new model in February 2025 — however, this is not soon enough. Additionally, the 157th ARW possesses one P-34 model truck unequipped to respond to aircraft rescue and is therefore, unable to contribute to the airport's needs. Given the systemic problems of recapitalizing fire trucks at Pease, we respectfully request that you accelerate the delivery of the fire truck scheduled to arrive in February 2025, expedite recapitalization of the obsolete P-34 model truck with a new P-19 truck, and use all available authorities to ensure that Pease has a sufficient number of fire trucks at all times to sustain safe and secure operations.


We appreciate your prompt attention to this urgent matter and respectfully request a response by December 1, 2023 detailing your efforts to ensure Pease has the equipment it needs going forward.

Sincerely,


Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator


Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator


Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress


Chris Pappas
Member of Congress