



## NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

1636 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON DC 20301-1636

JUL 9 2019

The Honorable Don Young  
United States House of Representatives  
1329 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-0001

Dear Ranking Member Young:

I am responding to your inquiry regarding the impacts House Resolution H.R. 2546 will have on the U.S. Army National Guard's (ARNG) High-Altitude Aviation Training Site (HAATS) in Gypsum, Colorado.

HAATS is an Army Aviation school that provides graduate level flight training for mountain techniques and power management at high altitudes. The facility serves the entire Department of Defense and our international partners. Aviators at HAATS learn skills that translate to both domestic and overseas operations, which have resulted in safe operations of military aircraft in high altitude environments and countless lives saved.

H.R. 2546 would substantially affect HAATS by designating 40% of the current training area as a wilderness area, thus limiting the ability for aviators to utilize current landing zones (LZs). Wilderness areas are categorized as noise-sensitive areas and require aircraft to operate at a minimum of 2,000 feet above ground level (in accordance with FAA Advisory Circular 91-36D, the FAA Aeronautical Information Manual, and the Army Regulation 95-1). The proposed legislation would cause aviators to travel greater distances to access landing zones for training, therefore reducing the overall efficiency of each flight and reducing the total throughput of aviators trained in a given year.

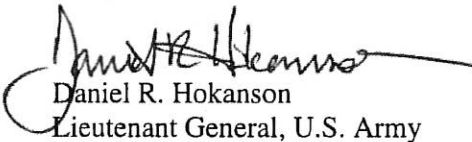
The training conducted at HAATS is critical to mitigate risk for service members conducting missions in high altitude rough terrain. HAATS graduates are the only individuals that obtain the skill sets necessary for high altitude operations and rescue missions. Two examples illustrate the benefits of this specialized training. On 24 June 2019 Vail Mountain Rescue Group (VMRG) requested assistance from the Colorado Army National Guard to provide Search and Rescue operations for two skiers trapped in an Avalanche in the vicinity of Holy Cross. The HAATS trained Colorado ARNG, in coordination with the VMRG, safely located, rescued, and evacuated the injured personnel to a medical treatment facility.

Further, a HAATS graduate aviator conducted a medical evacuation mission in the Helmand Providence of Afghanistan where the talcum-fine brown dust damaged the aircraft engines. The pilot was able to use the power management techniques he acquired at HAATS to safely land and move the medics and wounded Soldiers up and out of the extremely hazardous area.

Those are just two of many examples that illustrate the importance of HAATS training for our military aviators. The ARNG estimates H.R. 2546 will reduce the number of aviators we are able to train annually between 47% and 67%.

Should you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact MAJ Jonathan Grabill, National Guard Bureau Legislative Liaison, at (571) 256-7821 or [jonathan.h.grabill.mil@mail.mil](mailto:jonathan.h.grabill.mil@mail.mil).

Sincerely,

  
Daniel R. Hokanson  
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army  
Director, Army National Guard

Copy Forwarded:  
Chairman Debra Haaland