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From: Maria\_Cantwell  
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2005 8:05 AM  
To: se@catch4all.com  
Subject: From the Office of Senator Cantwell

March 28, 2005

Mrs. Sandra Englund

Dear Mrs. Englund:

Thank you for contacting me regarding the Boeing refueling planes. I appreciate hearing from you on this issue.

Since its founding in Seattle 85 years ago, Boeing has been an industrial anchor in Washington state and has become a global leader in innovation and technology. As Boeing and many other international corporations know first hand, Washington state is a prime location to do business. Puget Sound provides a commercial gateway to the world - the region is equal distance by air from both Europe and Asia, and its ports are among the busiest in the nation. Furthermore, Seattle's prosperous high tech sector provides many business opportunities and a well-trained workforce.

Both Boeing and the European aerospace company Airbus have expressed interest in competing for an Air Force tanker project. Once finalized, the 767 contracts could keep Boeing workers on the production line at a time when the state's economy needs it most. At its peak, the production of 767s would increase by 50 percent from current levels.

The Rand Corporation, an independent nonprofit research organization, researched and analyzed current proposal to replace KC-135. Its conclusion was that the Air Force should begin to replace the tankers between now and 2014 based on increasing maintenance costs for the aging fleet versus the cost of replacement.

It may interest you to know, the Department of Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 108-375) for fiscal year 2005 was enacted on October 28, 2004. This law allows the U.S. Air Force to decide to purchase up to 100 KC-767 refueling aircraft at some time in the next few months, or it may decide to acquire some other system. However, an amendment introduced by Representative Norm Dicks that would require a contract be finalized no later than March 1, 2005 was not included in the final Conference Report.

A principal responsibility of the U.S. Congress under the Constitution is to provide for the national defense. I take this responsibility very seriously, and support legislative efforts to maintain the effectiveness and readiness of the U.S.'s armed forces by modernizing our force capabilities to effectively meet future threats.

Thank you again for contacting me to share your thoughts on this matter. Finally, you may be interested in signing up for my weekly update for Washington state residents. Every Monday, I provide a brief outline about my work in the Senate and issues of importance to Washington state. If you are interested in subscribing to this update, please visit my website at <http://cantwell.senate.gov>. Please do not hesitate to contact me in the future if I can be of further assistance.  
Sincerely,

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator