JACKIE SPEIER
12TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

211 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0512
(202) 225-3531
FAX: (202) 226-4183

400 S. EL CAMINO REAL, SUITE 410
SAN MATEO, CA 94402
(650) 342-0300
FAX: (650) 375-8270

WWW.SPEIER.HOUSE.GOV

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0512

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEES:
READINESS
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

SUBCOMMITTEES:
REGULATORY AFFAIRS, STIMULUS OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT SPENDING
TARP, FINANCIAL SERVICES AND BAILOUTS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS
TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION POLICY, AND PROCUREMENT REFORM

December 21, 2012

The Honorable Buck McKeon, Chairman
The Honorable Adam Smith, Ranking Member
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith:

I am writing to ask for the committee to investigate how the Air Force's Expeditionary Combat Support System (ECSS) traded over $1 billion in taxpayer dollars for "negligible capability." I am deeply concerned that a program could continue for this long without any checks, and believe this waste reflects a systemic problem that warrants a congressional investigation.

Before the Air Force cancelled the program, Congress was repeatedly told that it was essential, and that without this program the Air Force would be "unable to achieve audit readiness because legacy accounting systems are not compliant with the CFO Act." When Congress questioned whether $5.2 billion was too much to pay for an overly complex system, and the Pentagon's Director of Operational Testing and Evaluation raised concerns that the requirements for the program could not be used to evaluate the program's progress, Air Force Chief of Staff General Schwartz told the House Armed Services committee it was something "we have got to stick with" and asked for Congress's "forbearance to press on." Only after the program was canceled did we learn the Air Force had added "every possible requirement into the program," making it too complex to succeed or be affordable, and that the Air Force was "appalled" by how little the program had achieved.

I am also concerned that many of the failures of the ECSS program are rooted in the Air Force relying upon the Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) to serve as lead systems integrators (LSI). This is not the first time that the government's reliance upon contractors as LSIs has cost taxpayers billions. The LSI-led Army Future Combat Systems (FCS), which has been cancelled, may end up costing taxpayers as much as $1.5 billion and the Coast Guard had to wrest control over its LSI-led Deepwater Program after the program experienced multibillion dollar overruns and significant cost delays. By allowing CSC to write many of the systems' requirements, I am alarmed that the Air Force may have effectively outsourced many key decisions about the program's management. Dozens of acquisition studies have shown that the requirements at the beginning of a program are one of the most decisive factors for a program's success, and I worry that the Air Force stepped away from making important tradeoffs in the beginning of the program that could have made this a success. Instead, taxpayer paid CSC $527 million, including $8.2 million in contract termination fees, only for the Air Force to ultimately conclude "CSC was

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

simply not up to the task." By the time the Air Force took back the role of LSI in March—nearly six years later—it was likely too late to get this program back on track.

I look forward to working with you and the rest of the committee to investigating what capabilities have been salvaged from this program, the Air Force's path forward to being audit ready by 2017, and whether more steps need to be taken to hold those responsible for this program's failures accountable. Beyond the ECSS program, we should also examine what steps are being taken to prevent similar "requirements creep" in complex enterprise resource planning, and preventing the waste of billions of dollars of taxpayer dollars in the future

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. A similar letter is being sent to Chairman Issa, whose committee also has jurisdiction.

Sincerely,

Jackie Speier