

WASHINGTON – The Defense Department’s draft Request for Proposal (RFP) for the KC-X aerial refueling tanker fails the rationality test and represents a bad deal for the American military and the taxpayer, said U.S. Rep. Jo Bonner, (R-AL). Congressman Bonner and other members of the Alabama Congressional Delegation sent a letter Monday to Defense Secretary Robert Gates, calling the draft RFP “fundamentally flawed.” Bonner requested a meeting with Gates at the earliest possible date to discuss the RFP.

The letter states in part: *“Repeated delay of this program over the past decade has only increased the urgency of proceeding as quickly as possible with acquiring a new air-refueling fleet for the Air Force. Since your decision to cancel the previous contract award post-GAO protest, testimony from numerous Combatant Commanders has validated the need to rapidly modernize the fleet with enhanced capabilities. We are very troubled that the draft RFP fails to address this requirement.”*

*“While we support the Department’s effort to quickly move forward with the tanker competition, this draft RFP is fundamentally flawed and does not achieve your stated objective of conducting a best value competition that is fair, open, and transparent. It fails the test of rationality.”*

Commenting separately, Congressman Bonner noted the draft RFP submitted by the Defense Department represents a significant step backwards in the KC-X tanker acquisition process and simply fails to provide the most capable and cost-effective tanker for the warfighter.

“It’s clear that the Defense Department has chosen to sacrifice new technology benefits for a design that will hardly improve performance over the existing 50-year-old fleet of Eisenhower-era KC-135s,” Rep. Bonner noted. “The Pentagon’s draft RFP fails to incorporate the 21st century performance requirements that were highly desirable during the first tanker competition, to the point of rendering the new design limited in mission capability and obsolete before it is even built.

“It is disappointing that the draft RFP seeks to lower the bar for KC-X performance while also placing limits on the contracting process which not only defy the spirit of the Acquisition Reform Act, but would also result in minimal aircraft standards and increased contract cost. This is unacceptable, and I look forward to discussing with Secretary Gates ways to restore fairness and value to the RFP process,” Rep. Bonner said.