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Salud O. Carbajal
24th District, California

2331 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3601

125 E. DE LA GUERRA STREET
SUITE 203B
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101
(805) 730-1710

505 POLI STREET, SUITE 201
VENTURA, CA 93001
(805) 730-1710

1411 MARSH STREET, SUITE 205
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401
(805) 546-8348

CARBAJAL.HOUSE.GOV

October 23, 2025

Admiral Kevin E. Lunday
Acting Commandant, United States Coast Guard
United States Coast Guard Headquarters
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE
Washington, D.C. 20593

Dear Admiral Lunday:

The U.S. Coast Guard (Coast Guard or Service) has a long-standing history of serving this country honorably but often goes underfunded which has led to the need to recapitalize the fleet of cutters and aircraft. According to a July 29 report provided to Congress by the Coast Guard, the Service has 118 rotary wing aircraft –73 of which are MH-65 that operate well beyond their service life and no longer in production. While the Service intends to transition to all MH-60s and grow the rotary wing fleet to 127 aircraft, this will take time to do so. Simply put, the Service currently does not have a helicopter to spare.

It has recently been brought to my attention that the Secretary of Homeland Security is utilizing Coast Guard helicopters for local transit in and around the Washington D.C. area. As Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I hold concerns that this unprecedented demand is taking resources from an already limited and underfunded service. Further, I am concerned with the impact on the already congested airspace around Washington National Airport.

This Secretary is the first to requisition the Commandant's living quarters, the first to demand that the Coast Guard purchase a jet and use it for mixed purpose executive travel, and, now, the first to utilize Coast Guard helicopters for local travel. In the past, this sort of treatment has been reserved for the President and Vice President.

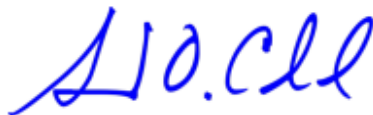
In order to best understand the impact this has on the Coast Guard, please respond to the questions below by November 28, 2025.

- Please provide the dates, times, locations, flight logs, and approval forms associated with instances when the Secretary was transported via Coast Guard helicopter.
- Has the Secretary reimbursed the Coast Guard for the use of housing or aircraft and, if so, at what rate?
- Which rotary wing aircraft were used to transport the Secretary?
- What station or stations were the aircraft moved from?

- How many rotary wing aircraft operational hours have gone towards moving the Secretary in D.C. airspace?
- As a result of airspace restrictions following the crash between Flight 5342 and Priority Air Transport 25, is the Secretary's helicopter movement causing Ronald Reagan National Airport to halt flights?
- What sort of advanced notice is the Coast Guard and the Secretary providing to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)?
- Is the Secretary's use of Coast Guard rotary wing aircraft classified as priority aircraft by the FAA? If classified as priority, does that apply to her personal use of the rotary wing aircraft for travel?
- Other than the President and the Vice President, what other government executive travel in D.C. regional airspace is classified as priority aircraft?
- When departing DCA, what route does the helicopter take?
- Has the Coast Guard consulted with the FAA regarding the safety implications with increased air traffic congestion?
- Outside of the President, Vice President, and Secretary of Defense, it is uncommon for Cabinet Secretaries to use government helicopters for travel convenience. What is the Secretary's justification for this increased use of Coast Guard assets?
- Have there been instances of rotary wing aircraft being unavailable or delays to mission response while the Secretary is utilizing the helicopter?
- Has this use by the Secretary contributed to increased operational hours on the rotary wing aircrafts and what are the anticipated maintenance costs for the use?

Increased use of Coast Guard aircraft not only puts additional strain on the Service but it also complicates an already congested D.C. airspace and jeopardizes Coast Guard mission readiness. Thank you for your time and consideration answering these questions as we work to ensure Coast Guard assets are not being abused and ensure a safe airspace in the Washington D.C. area.

Sincerely,



Salud Carbajal
 Ranking Member
 Subcommittee on Coast Guard
 and Maritime Transportation
 Committee on Transportation
 And Infrastructure