

Letter: Use 747 Supertanker

July 14, 2021



Here we are, at the beginning of what could prove to be worst wildfire season ever and the world's best firefighting tool sits unused and not ready to go because of decisions made by the U.S. Forest Service and states not to use it.

Unfortunately, in 2002 two Lockheed C-130 Hercules airplanes crashed while fighting fires, one in California and one in Colorado. In 2004, the Forest Service made the decision not to use the large tanker firefighting airplanes, instead relying on helicopters and smaller planes. The Supertanker would have really helped on these fires: The 2020 Oregon fires burned 1,221,324 acres, killed 11 people and burned 3,000 buildings. At Canby in the middle of the day, the streetlights and outside lights of businesses were on because of the darkness from the smoke. On July 12, 2017, lightning started the Chetco Bar fire, near Brookings, and it burned 191,125 acres. In 2017, The Eagle Creek fire near Cascade Locks, burned 50,000 acres and most likely could have been put out quickly by the Supertanker if it would have been used. There is a large fire burning at Mt. Shasta in California. Are we going to have to experience a disaster, (Holocaust), like the building collapse at Surfside, Florida, before we realize that we need to prepare for these things ahead of time? When the fire is burning, it is too late to start preparing for it.

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