



UNITED STATES ARMY

THE CHIEF OF STAFF

NOV 29 2012

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Thank you for your September 24, 2012 letter concerning the M973 Small Unit Support Vehicle (SUSV) fleet. The Army has no operational warfighting requirement for the capability that had been filled by the SUSV fleet.

When the Department of Defense re-designated missions following the cold war, some Army missions were identified as "less likely to occur" and equipment associated with those missions was either re-purposed or removed. The SUSV was a commercially available solution supporting a very specific need that was not considered among the likely common range of operations that applied to the total Army. For this reason, the Army removed the SUSV as a standard piece of warfighting equipment. Should an unforeseen contingency arise, the Army has processes in place to quickly address requests for non-standard equipment. We are in the process of researching the employment of an armored variant of the SUSV by coalition members in Afghanistan.

Although the active Army component does not have an operational requirement for the SUSV, the United States Army Alaska does maintain the requirement for a Joint Arctic Support Vehicle to provide a mountain and cold weather, off road capability in support of training and operations in Alaska. The United States Army Alaska Commanding General has approved a fleet of 82 SUSVs to meet this requirement; they are looking to cut that requirement to 57 (20 at Fort Wainwright, 20 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, 17 in support of Range Control and the Northern Warfare Training Center). These 57 SUSVs are used by active component personnel for special missions on terrain that other vehicles cannot traverse.

In a state support mission, the SUSV provides a capability to help accomplish missions assigned to the Army National Guard (ARNG), such as search and rescue or assistance in natural or man-made disasters. The ARNG is retaining SUSVs in multiple states, including Alaska, based on Table of Distribution and Allowance authorizations. To address sustainment, the Army and Marines are working a rebuild program that will complete testing soon. The ARNG will use the final specifications of this rebuild program and fund the overhaul of 30 SUSVs per year until the ARNG requirement for SUSVs is met. Their goal for overhaul completion is by the end of Fiscal Year 2015.

I will have someone from my staff follow-up with a briefing on the future of assured, protected mobility. Thank you for your continued support to our Army, Soldiers, Families, Civilians, and Veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Odierno', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Raymond T. Odierno
General, United States Army