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Senior Air Safety Investigator
AS-WPR

Date: April 29, 2024

Subject: WPR24FA132, Record of Conversation

Contact: Christopher Rannemose, Ground Crew, Heliworks Flight Services

On April 26, 2024, a Bell 206L Helicopter (N988B), operated by Heliworks Flight Services and conducting aerial application operations, crashed near Anaconda, Montana.

Mr. Rannemose was the ground crewmember assigned to the operation on the day of the accident. He said the helicopter was refueled the day prior to the accident. He and the pilot met at the airport early on the morning of the accident. The pilot told him he had a head cold. After meeting at the airport, he drove the support truck to the operating location where the pilot would meet him. The pilot flew to the operating location and landed near the load truck. The pilot conducted a risk assessment and safety briefing with Mr. Rannemose and a representative from Atlantic Richfield (Logan Foster), who was the company that they were applying fertilizer for. He said the company representative would be on site all morning.

Mr. Rannemose thought the pilot departed with the first load about 0635. He said he lost track of exactly how many loads the pilot had applied, but thought the accident load may have been the fifth load. He said he expected the pilot to refuel after 1-2 more loads.

Mr. Rannemose said following the last load the helicopter departed and he did not see or hear the accident. He said he was performing duties on the opposite side of the truck from where the helicopter departed to, and he could not hear the helicopter after it departed due to his headset and the noise of the truck. He said he was in regular radio contact with the pilot during the operations and that the pilot did

not report any problems with the helicopter. He said he became concerned when the pilot did not answer him and did not return when he expected him to. He thought the time between loads was about 5-6 minutes.

Mr. Rannemose said Mr. Foster drove to him and said the helicopter had crashed. He rode with Mr. Foster to the crash site and went to the helicopter and flipped switches to turn things off, but he didn't have knowledge of the helicopter to know exactly what to do. He said the accident site was along the same path the helicopter used for departing and returning to the load truck. He said the weather and visibility were good that morning and the wind was calm.