

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 25, 2019

The Honorable Barbara M. Barrett  
Secretary of the Air Force  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Barrett:

Congratulations on your confirmation as the 25<sup>th</sup> Secretary of the Air Force. We are writing regarding your upcoming decision on which two locations will host the Air National Guard's next F-35A operational bases following the completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We urge you to select Selfridge Air National Guard Base (ANGB) in Macomb County, Michigan as one of those locations.

The Air Force's Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Strategic Basing Site Survey Team found Selfridge ANGB well suited to serve as the next Air National Guard F-35A operations base. Selfridge's outstanding airmen, modern facilities, unique training range and low cost of conversion with no risk to the mission make the 127<sup>th</sup> Wing an ideal choice for bedding down the F-35A. Additionally, Macomb County residents and the surrounding community welcome the people and the mission of the Air National Guard.

As you are aware, during the strategic basing process in December 2017, former Secretary Heather Wilson identified Truax Field Air National Guard Base in Madison, Wisconsin as one of two preferred alternative locations. We understand that last month, the City of Madison submitted a letter with 22 pages of public comments, tasking the Air Force with 25 questions to be resolved in the Final EIS, and requesting that if those questions are not satisfactorily answered, you, as Secretary of the Air Force, reconsider listing Truax Field as a preferred location. In addition to numerous complaints about the F-35 mission from individual Madison residents, the Madison Common Council also passed a resolution raising the community's substantial concerns with basing the F-35A mission at Truax Field.

Macomb County, Michigan's residents and elected officials welcome a potential F-35 mission and have consistently offered community support to Selfridge and its tenants. Selfridge offers the capabilities and facilities ideally suited to sustain F-35 operations.

**The 127<sup>th</sup> Wing has a number of core advantages:**

- **People** – As the previous holders of the Spaatz Trophy, awarded to the best flying organization in the Air National Guard, the women and men of the 127<sup>th</sup> Wing have proven

their mettle in combat. They were also awarded the Meritorious Unit Award, only the third Air National Guard Wing in history to be recognized as such for "outstanding devotion & exceptional performance."

- **Facilities** – Selfridge could immediately, with very minor modifications, beddown the F-35A. Selfridge, a former F-16 base, is the only location under consideration that could house every one of the planned F-35As inside environmentally controlled hangars. The base's large modern operations facilities provide robust and resilient infrastructure to ensure maintenance, operations, and security for unsurpassed readiness.
- **Training** – Selfridge's immediate access to three overland/water military operations areas/Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspaces and three weapons delivery (restricted area) ranges for daily training operations is a substantial asset. The base was determined to be above average in their ability to support F-35 Ready Aircrew Program requirements and can fully support 100% of the requirement. Michigan hosts the largest contiguous joint service range/airspace complex east of the Mississippi River, including supersonic airspace, unique littoral topography, a vast overland joint fires range with all-altitude ordnance capability to an overwater/overland live fire range with moving targets and mobile advanced electronic joint threat emitters. These locations provide tremendous opportunities for development of F-35 close air support tactics and joint training with allies.

Every year the Michigan National Guard hosts Operation Northern Strike bringing together over 5,000 servicemembers from over 20 states and allies for a joint exercise. This is the only accredited reserve component joint training in the United States.

The 127th Wing concurrently operates the KC-135 Stratotanker in the global mobility mission offering unparalleled synergy of training, efficiency, and mobility opportunities/operations.


- **Cost** – There are no "double conversions" associated with selecting the 127<sup>th</sup> Wing. The cost of conversion is minimal and converting Selfridge to the F-35A mission allows the distribution of A-10 aircraft to other Air National Guard units.


We are proud of the men and women serving in the Michigan National Guard, and of our State's contribution to our nation's defense. Over the past decade, the State of Michigan absorbed 25% of the cuts to personnel in the Air Guard. The 110<sup>th</sup> Wing and 127<sup>th</sup> Wing of the Michigan Air Guard have overcome many challenges and changes in mission, but are now on a path to become the most advanced wings in the country. A decision to beddown the F-35A at Selfridge will complete the transformation and modernization of these vital national assets, and deepen Michigan's valuable partnership with the U.S. Air Force. We invite you to visit Selfridge to see this commitment firsthand. We would be happy to host you in Michigan and facilitate conversations with relevant stakeholders.


The future F-35 mission has the support of the Michigan Congressional Delegation, state and local leaders and the Macomb County community. The citizens living around Selfridge ANGB


have hosted military airfield operations for 100 years and look forward to welcoming future active duty airmen and their families when an active association for the F-35 is established.


Sincerely,

  
Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

  
Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator

  
Paul Mitchell  
Member of Congress

  
Fred Upton  
Member of Congress

  
Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress

  
Jack Bergman  
Member of Congress

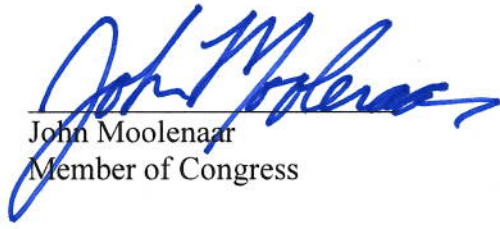
  
Brenda L. Lawrence  
Member of Congress

  
Tim Walberg  
Member of Congress

  
Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress

  
Bill Huizenga  
Member of Congress

  
Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



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John Moolenaar  
Member of Congress



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Andy Levin  
Member of Congress



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Daniel T. Kildee  
Member of Congress