

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 11, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Barrett,

We write as members of the Michigan congressional delegation to urge you to select Selfridge Air National Guard Base (ANGB) as the preferred location for the beddown of the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) F-35 training mission and the Republic of Singapore Air Force's F-16 training operations. Selfridge ANGB's outstanding ranges and facilities are ideally suited for these important missions and the strategic basing scorecard clearly and conclusively affirms that Selfridge ANGB stands alone as the superior choice.

The core Michigan advantages are clear:

Airfield – Selfridge can immediately beddown both the FMS F-35 flight training mission and the Republic of Singapore Air Force F-16 missions, at minimal cost, with minimal facility modifications.

Airspace and Training Ranges – Michigan hosts the largest contiguous joint overland service range/airspace complex east of the Mississippi River, and Selfridge offers access to three overland/water MOAs/ATCAAs (to include supersonic) and three weapons delivery (restricted area) ranges for daily operations and large force exercises. These exceptional national resources supporting military readiness are currently being expanded based on the Air Staff approval of a Test/Training Space Needs Statement in 2019. Michigan's Alpena Special Use Airspace Complex also supports a robust and relevant simulated threat environment and is equipped with three mobile Joint Threat Emitters (JTE) with the capability to emulate advanced threat systems.

National All-Domain Warfighting Center (NADWC) – Michigan is home to the NADWC and hosts the joint, multi-national Northern Strike Exercise, the largest accredited joint all-domain, live-fire, reserve component readiness exercise in the continental United States.

Flight Operations Experience - Selfridge has extensive flying operations experience hosting both A-10 fighter and KC-135 tanker missions. The base converted from the F-16 fighter mission in 2009. In the past 27 years, Selfridge has flown over 181,000 hours without a Class A mishap. Unlike the active duty Air Force, where pilots and maintainers transfer assignments and move every two to four years, Air National Guard pilots and maintainers never have to transfer. This level of experience will be a significant benefit for FMS mission. Further, Selfridge's

proximity to Detroit's international airport ensures an experienced pool of talent to perform the contract FMS support.

Environmental Analysis – The Air Force recently completed an EIS for the beddown of up to 18 F-35As for Ops 5/6 at Selfridge ANGB and therefore any additional analysis required would save considerable time and costs.

Optimal Weather – Selfridge meets the F-35 training weather requirement an impressive 300 days per year – 16 percent more days than the average usual annual flying schedule of 252 – and allows for training in weather similar to that of many coalition nations.

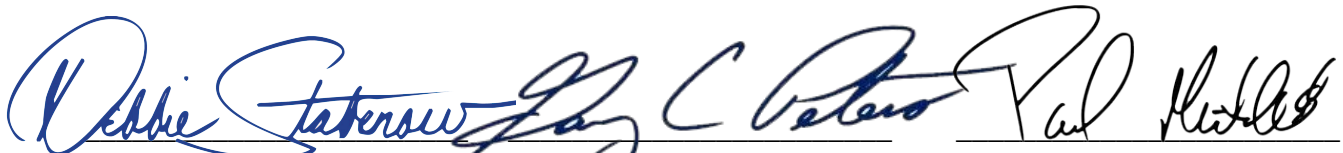
Community Support – Michigan's diverse, multicultural population welcomes the military, embraces airmen and their families and offers exceptional quality-of-life benefits, including outstanding educational and cultural institutions with the shortest flight times home through Detroit's international airport. The community is committed to working with the Republic of Singapore to construct dedicated culturally accustomed housing for their military members and families if desired.

Freedom from Constraints – Selfridge ANGB is the only location under consideration that owns the airfield and does not raise national security and/or environmental concerns; in the case of one site, JBSA-Lackland, its presence on the list is questionable as two additional F-16 Squadrons were not relocated to the installation partially due to the fact that their existing Environmental Impact Analysis Process documentation does not appear to adequately support existing F-16 operations at the installation.

Recently the leadership of the Michigan National Guard hosted in-person meetings in Washington, DC with the Defense Attaches from Singapore, Poland, Finland and Switzerland. The conversations were an excellent opportunity to introduce Michigan's advantages, affirm its' commitment, answer questions and demonstrate the myriad ways in which Selfridge and its training ranges are more similar to an active duty location than a traditional Air National Guard base.

We understand you will be making a decision soon, based on the criteria identified in the Air Force Strategic Basing Process and the requirements for this particular mission. For additional information, we refer you to this letter's appendix, titled "The Michigan Advantage". We appreciate the opportunity to advocate for the selection of Selfridge ANGB.

Sincerely,

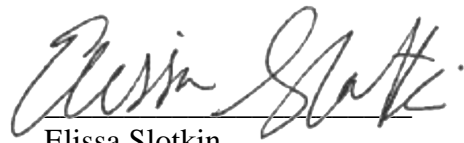

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator.

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

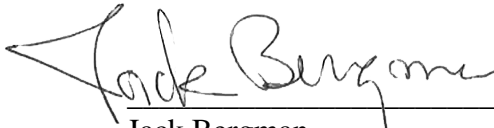
Paul Mitchell
Member of Congress



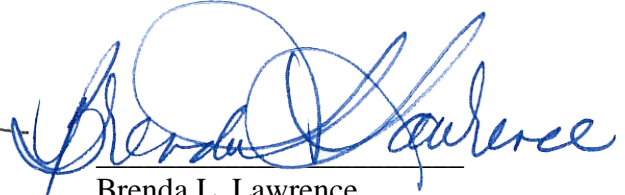
Fred Upton
Member of Congress



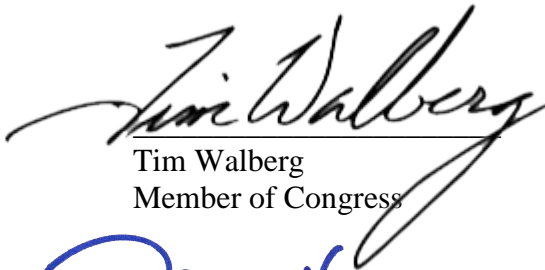
Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



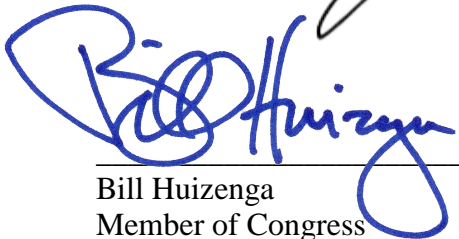
Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress



Tim Walberg
Member of Congress



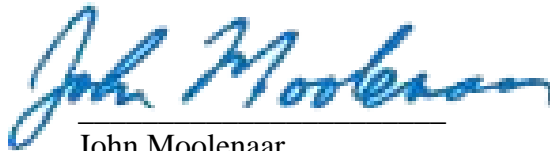
Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



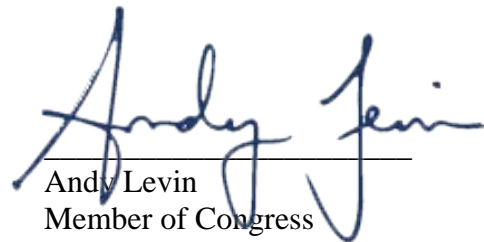
Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



John Moolenaar
Member of Congress



Andy Levin
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

CC: John W. Henderson, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, Installations, Environment and Energy
Kelli L. Seybolt, Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs

Appendix: The Michigan Advantage

The Air Force makes strategic basing decisions by assessing each base on its mission impact, capacity to accommodate a mission, cost and economic factors, environmental factors and national security considerations. In all categories on the strategic basing scorecard, Selfridge ANGB outcores the other sites.

- **Airfield** - Selfridge ANGB can immediately, with exceedingly small modifications, beddown both the FMS F-35 and F-16 missions. Selfridge, a former F-16 base, has a large ramp with modern facilities, providing for a robust and secure infrastructure to support unsurpassed operational schoolhouse training. Selfridge has more ramp space than the other competing bases by a large margin, with the capacity to accommodate additional FMS training customers in the future and the ability to host adversary air units. The airfield is owned by the Michigan Air National Guard and is unencumbered by civilian use or other MAJCOM requirements. The host wing, the 127WG has training enabling aircraft on premise and close by. The Wing concurrently operates the KC-135 Stratotanker and the A-10, offering unmatched synergy of training and mobility opportunities. Additionally, the 180FW F-16's are located 80 miles away, offering USAF fighter training opportunities as well as being a potential divert base with runway emergency barriers and maintenance capability. About 150 miles to the west, the 110WG at W.K. Kellogg ANGB in Battle Creek operates the MQ-9 mission, a cybersecurity operations mission, an Air Operations Group, and maintains a 10,000-foot runway.
- **Airspace and Training Ranges** – The State hosts substantial special use airspace assets with three overland/water MOAs/ATCAAs and three weapons delivery (restricted area) ranges for daily operations. The site survey determined the airspace to be above average in the ability to support F-35 RAP requirements and can support 100% of the syllabus requirements. The Michigan Guard also manages 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 over water/over land live fire range with moving targets and mobile advanced electronic joint threat emitters.
- **National All-Domain Warfighting Center (NADWC)** – This year the Michigan National Guard rebranded the massive training areas of Camp Grayling Maneuver Training Center and Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center into the National All-Domain Warfighting Center (NADWC). The NADWC provides nearly 148,000 acres of maneuver space and the largest military airspace complex east (17,000 square miles) of the Mississippi River. Each year since 2012, this training environment has hosted the Northern Strike exercise, the largest annual reserve component joint fires readiness event of its kind. The event brings together over 5,000 Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Special Forces from over 20 states and numerous coalition countries for a joint exercise. This is the largest accredited

reserve component joint training in the United States. Selfridge's access to this capability includes multiple threat emitters and a combination of unique over water and over land terrain that allows for live weapons employment, while the diverse weather conditions replicate the flying environments across FMS countries. Additionally, the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center offers a forward operating airfield. This complex offers quick turn sortie capability just a five-minute flight from the air to ground range complex. Aircraft land after the first sortie, regenerate with fuel and ordnance and depart for another sortie before returning to Selfridge. Additionally, with the co-location of tanker aircraft, pilots can fight – air refuel – fight, efficiently doubling sortie training. Both training capabilities maximize training while reducing flying costs transiting to and from the airspace.

- **Flight Operations Experience** – The two other ANG bases – Hulman Field and Fort Smith – have not hosted a flying mission in many years and do not own their airfield or manage their own airspace. Selfridge has a long history with extensive flying experience. Currently the base has both A-10s and KC-135s and is uniquely positioned to host the Singapore F-16s at short notice due to having previously hosted the F-16 fighter mission until a conversion in 2009. Unlike the active duty Air Force, where pilots and maintainers transfer assignments and move every two to four years, Air National Guard pilots and maintainers never have to transfer. This level of experience will be a significant benefit for FMS mission.
- **Optimal Weather** – Selfridge meets the FMS basing weather requirement of ceiling above 3000 feet and visibility of 3 miles, 300 days per year - exceeding the average annual number of scheduled flying days of 252 by 16 percent, or 48 days. This margin allows for adequate rescheduling of syllabus sortie training. Selfridge ANGB winter snowstorms are predictable well in advance, unlike thunderstorms found in the Rockies or Texas snowstorms and the airfield has experienced and robust snow-removal capability. There is negligible threat to flying and facility damage attributable to hurricanes, hailstorms, wildfires, earthquakes or tornadoes. Additionally, the diverse airspaces in the local area mitigate most flying training weather impacts.
- **Community Support** – Michigan's diverse and multicultural communities are excited for the opportunity to host these new missions and welcome the pilots and their families with open arms. Dozens of programs are in place to support and provide quality of life amenities and benefits to the airmen and their families at and around the base. The local population includes large Singaporean, Polish, Finnish, and Swiss diasporas that will be engaged to help new partner nation airmen and their families feel welcomed. Local leaders will work with builders to develop new housing specifically for FMS customers. Macomb County and its surrounding areas offer strong K-12 and post-secondary schools while the region is home to multiple established colleges and universities. With Detroit Metro Airport (DTW) only 44 miles away, FMS partner members and their dependents have access to the quickest travel routes to partner nations and the Air Force would gain access to a pool of pilots and maintainers hard to recruit outside of airline hubs. We know they will also make positive contributions to our region's culture and diversity as well as our schools, churches, and

civic organizations. Our FMS partners deserve to be stationed in communities that welcome them and appreciate the significant investments made by those countries to support these new training missions.

- **Freedom from Constraints** – Unlike the two active duty locations under consideration – Buckley AFB and JBSA Lackland - Selfridge does not support any highly classified national security missions. In the Air Force briefing to Congress, it was stated that F-35 FMS training is incompatible with the training of U.S. and Partner nations’ fifth generation aircraft operations. As this criterion was included to address national security concerns, one would expect the same limitation should apply to bedding down FMS-35 aircraft near military installations supporting critical national security missions.

We are also concerned that the timeline for conducting the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) will be unnecessarily extended an additional 12 -24 months to accommodate the consideration of JBSA-Lackland in San Antonio. There is no reason for this installation to be included in the analysis since it was determined in 2017 that the current operations are in violation of the existing EIS. The Air Force recently completed an EIS for the beddown of up to 18 F-35As for Ops 5/6 at Selfridge ANGB and therefore any additional analysis required would save considerable time and costs.

Given the unambiguous warnings implicit in the National Defense Strategy, the importance of bedding down this mission expeditiously merits a location that will minimize any risk, disruption, and distractions.

In 2017, Joint Base San Antonio – Lackland (Kelly Field) was analyzed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This EA was titled “Interim Relocation of Two F-16 Squadrons” and informed Air Force leadership’s decision as to moving F-16s from Hill AFB, Utah, to either Holloman AFB, New Mexico, or Kelly Field. There were challenges identified at each installation and Holloman AFB was ultimately selected. One challenge related to Kelly Field is stated in section 4.6.2 of the EA:

“Airspace, air-to-ground range availability and scheduling limitations may result in operational and student FTU syllabus production limitation. F-16 IQT training is currently performed within the airspace available and utilized by JBSA-Lackland; however, thorough EIAP documentation analyzing regional airspace utilization is lacking and additional data collection, interpretation, and analysis should be undertaken to confirm this determination.”

Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP) is how the Air Force complies with NEPA. What this 2017 EA is pointing to is the apparent absence of environmental documentation supporting the scope of the F-16 mission currently based at Kelly Field. In 1999, there were F-16 mission changes at then Ellington Air National Guard Base and Kelly AFB. “Environmental Assessment for the Conversion of the 149th and 147th Fighter Wings and Associated Airspace Actions” is the EA that addressed these changes, namely converting the 149 FW at Kelly AFB to a F-16 schoolhouse and the 147 FW at Ellington ANGB from an air sovereignty alert mission to “general purpose” readiness. This 1999 EA, prepared by

the Air National Guard Environmental Division, extensively addresses low-level flying on training routes, operations in a Restricted Area scheduled by NAS Kingsville, and identifies other types of Special Use Airspace in proximity to the low-level routes and the Restricted Area. It does not discuss the frequency or types of flight operations that occur in the additional Special Use Airspace. This was the concern expressed in the 2017 F-16 relocation EA since that team identified approximately 30 pieces of Special Use Airspace required to support the F-16 flying at Kelly Field. This constrained airspace environment and the tenuous regulatory foothold provided by the 1999 Unit conversion EA is likely to be a concern to anyone considering basing additional fighter aircraft at Kelly Field.