

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 31, 2013

Honorable Michael Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

General Mark A. Welsh
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force
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Gentlemen:

Last evening the Air Force issued a news release announcing the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed relocation of the 18th Aggressor Squadron from Eielson Air Force Base to Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER) and the subsequent downsizing of Eielson Air Force Base. At the same time the Air Force announced a 60 day written comment period and public hearings during the week of June 17th.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement accurately notes that this proposed action will have a devastating economic impact on Interior Alaska. Among these impacts is a potential rise in the Interior Alaska unemployment rate from 6.2% to 8.9% - a ten year high -- a significant adverse impact on property values in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, and the potential closure of high quality schools on Eielson.

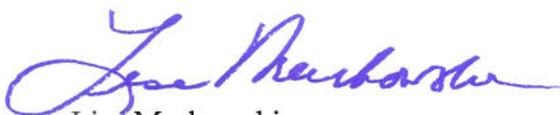
The Draft Environmental Impact Statement also identifies adverse environmental impacts at JBER which include an uncertain but likely not positive impact on Cook Inlet Beluga Whales, noise in the Mountain View section of Anchorage which might negatively affect classrooms in that community, and the possibility that at least 150 relocating families might not find housing close enough to JBER to meet Air Force standards.

Alaskans will be interested in sharing their views in person on the impending backdoor BRAC of Eielson Air Force Base and potential adverse impacts on communities adjacent to JBER. However, the announced hearing schedule leaves Alaskans no more than 10 working days to evaluate the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and prepare for these hearings.

This afternoon our staffs had the opportunity to discuss this schedule with Alaska community leaders during a weekly conference call pertaining to the Eielson relocation. The unanimous response was that this hearing schedule does not afford Alaskans enough time to formulate meaningful comments and should be delayed. We have been asked by community leaders to request that the hearings be rescheduled for the week of July 8th.

We appreciate your immediate attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Don Young
Congressman for All Alaska