

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

July 22, 2013

Honorable Eric Fanning
Acting Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

General Mark A. Welsh III
Chief of Staff, US Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Gentlemen:

During the week of July 15, 2013, PACAF and the Air Force Civil Engineer Center conducted public hearings in four Alaska communities on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to support the Air Force's proposal to relocate the 18th Aggressor Squadron to Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER) and downsize Eielson Air Force base. The hearings were generally well attended enabling a cross section of Alaskans to comment on the DEIS and its alternatives. Those Alaskans who took a moment out of their too brief Alaskan summer to testify overwhelmingly expressed support for the "No Action" alternative.

Although it was expected that the Fairbanks and North Pole communities would turn out in large numbers to oppose the Air Force's proposal, and they did not disappoint, some of the most passionate testimony in opposition to the proposal came from the Mountain View community of Anchorage, just outside the gates of JBER. The key concerns at this hearing were noise and lack of available housing— impacts which testifiers thought were understated in the DEIS.

We commend to you the testimony of Darrel Hess, a member of the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission who formerly served as Homelessness Coordinator for the Municipality of Anchorage. Mr. Hess testified that the infusion of additional military personnel into Anchorage would stress an already stressed housing market potentially creating a cascading effect in which lower income Anchorage residents would be pushed into the shelter system, displaced from their homes by higher income service members competing for scarce apartment units. This is of particular concern in Mountain View which has recently been described as the most diverse neighborhood in America. It was a concern identified in the scoping process earlier this year but not adequately addressed in the DEIS.

The Municipality of Anchorage formally recognizes some 38 community councils as the voice of neighborhood government in the municipality. The community councils generally meet monthly in a town meeting format to discuss issues of importance to the neighborhoods they represent.

The President of the Mountain View Community Council testified at the Anchorage hearing that the Air Force's plan to relocate the 18th Aggressor Squadron to JBER was of great interest to his community. He complained that the Air Force did not reach out to his community regarding the proposal and would like for the matter to be discussed at the next regularly scheduled council meeting on August 12th. That is unfortunately ten days after the DEIS public comment period closes. We would appreciate if you would consider extending the close of the public comment period from August 2 to August 30 in order to provide more Alaskans with the opportunity to participate in the DEIS process.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

		
Lisa Murkowski United States Senator	Mark Begich United States Senator	Don Young Congressman for all Alaska

cc: General Herbert Carlisle, Commander PACAF
Mr. Allen Richmond, Air Force Civil Engineer Center