

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 14, 2016

The Honorable Deborah Lee James  
Secretary  
United States Air Force  
HQ USAF  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

General David Goldfein  
Chief of Staff  
United States Air Force  
HQ USAF  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

Secretary James and General Goldfein:

In light of the decision for the Operations 5 and 6 beddown of the F-35A Lightning II to be based at five candidate military installations around the country, we are writing to express our disappointment in the Air Force's exclusion of the Atlantic City Air National Guard Base, home to the 177<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing (FW).

In future basing decisions for next generation aircraft, including upcoming F-35A basing decisions, we hope the following qualities are considered for selecting the Atlantic City Air National Guard Base:

**Low Cost/Ready Now/Sustainable:** Base infrastructure and facilities postured

Newer facilities at the installation have already been designed to meet the needs of the F-35, and its older facilities require only limited modifications to become 5<sup>th</sup> generation capable. For example, there is covered parking for the entire fleet of F-35s, a state of the art maintenance facility integrated with 5<sup>th</sup> generation capability, and space readily available for simulator upgrades. The base also has a recently constructed air support operations squadron building ready for F-35 air-to-ground integration.

**Strategic Location:** Centrally positioned

Located in Egg Harbor Township, the Atlantic City Air National Guard Base is strategically situated halfway between Washington D.C. and New York City. The area surrounding the base is predominantly agricultural, low-density residential with more than 50 percent of Atlantic County located within the New Jersey Pineland National Reserve. The base is also a primary launching point for missions to Europe, located near Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst for active duty support functions, and has optimum weather conditions year round.

**Combat Ready Track Record:** Recent combat mission execution


The 177<sup>th</sup> FW has the distinction of having an operations group that is comprised of a fighter squadron, an air support operations squadron, and a bombing range all under a single command. The unit has more than 14 years of homeland defense experience; including three combat deployments: Operation Iraqi Freedom (2006, 2010) and Operation Enduring Freedom (2012). The 177<sup>th</sup> FW also plays a critical role in both the Air Combat Command's Aerospace Expeditionary Force structure and NORAD's Air Force Aerospace Control Alert mission.


We believe these qualities demonstrate strategic military value for the Air Force, and that the Atlantic City Air National Guard Base would be an ideal location for the F-35A looking forward.

We also look forward to any comments regarding changes the Atlantic City Air National Guard Base can make to improve its candidacy for future F-35A basing decisions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

  
Rep. Frank A. LoBiondo

  
Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr.

  
Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr.


  
Rep. Albio Sires

  
Rep. Christopher H. Smith

  
Rep. Scott Garrett

  
Rep. Tom MacArthur

  
Rep. Leonard Lance



Rep. Donald M. Payne, Jr.



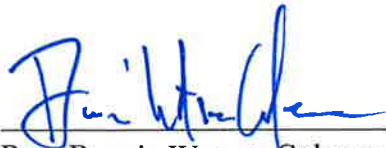
Rep. Donald Norcross



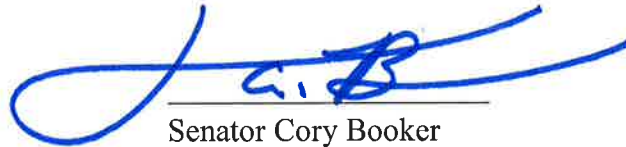
Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen



Senator Robert Menendez



Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman



Senator Cory Booker