

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

July 2, 2020

The Honorable Barbara Barrett
Secretary
United States Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20331

Dear Secretary Barrett,

Recently, Governor Phil Murphy extended an invitation to you to visit the New Jersey Air National Guard 177th Fighter Wing and offered his support for the 177th Fighter Wing to be considered as a candidate for a basing location for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. We encourage your visit to the 177th Fighter Wing and express our strong support for the 177th Fighter Wing to be selected as a candidate base for the next round of basing decisions for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

The 177th Fighter Wing in Egg Harbor Township at the Atlantic City International Airport is strategically situated halfway between Washington, DC and New York City. The base is also a primary launching point for missions to Europe is located near Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst for active duty support functions, and has optimum weather conditions year round.

The 177th Fighter Wing has established an outstanding record of service to our Nation. The 119th Fighter Squadron has deployed five times over the past ten years including Iraq (2010), Afghanistan (2012), Korea (2014, 2017) and Homeland Defense (2019) for sensitive national security events. Since 2001, the 119th Fighter Squadron along with the 177th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron has provided 24/7 fighter alert in support of US Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command.

Critical military construction investments for the 177th Fighter Wing in recent years provide for low cost transition to prepare the Fighter Wing for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. Runways provide 10,000 feet, with cables, lights approaches, and 24 hour control towers. Indoor parking is available for 33 aircraft and 12,000 square feet of space is ready for Networked Simulators. A newly constructed corrosion control fuel cell facility will provide for protected areas for fuel system maintenance and environmentally controlled area to wash aircraft and hangar space for corrosion treatment and repair.

We believe that these qualities demonstrate strategic military value for the United States Air Force, and that 177th Fighter Wing is well positioned to be an ideal basing location for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Jeff Van Drew
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress