



SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

MAY 22 2018

Mayor Miro Weinberger
City Hall
149 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05401

Dear Mayor Weinberger:

Thank you for your April 9, 2018 letter supporting the Air Force decision to base the F-35 at Burlington Air National Guard Base and for sharing the Burlington City Council's resolution.

We expect the first F-35 aircraft to arrive in Burlington in 2019. This decision was finalized in 2013 after a 48-month review which assessed 205 locations and concluded that the Burlington International Airport was the best Air National Guard option. If that decision were to be reversed, the Vermont Air National Guard would likely lose their flying mission upon the retirement of the F-16s. The Air Force is much smaller than it was at the end of the Cold War. We have fewer bases and fewer aircraft. As a result, some states no longer have flying missions for their National Guard and the competition to secure new missions is fierce.

As you mentioned in your letter, we received numerous comments on hosting F-35s at Burlington during the Environmental Impact Statement public involvement phases. Within this process, we addressed for public record the questions the City Council expressed in its resolution. As this basing action moves forward, we will continue to engage transparently with the community. In recent meetings I have had with Governor Scott and members of Vermont's Congressional delegation, they have also expressed their continued support for the Vermont Air National Guard and our decision to modernize fighter aircraft stationed there.

The Air Force has made significant investments in the State of Vermont and the City of Burlington. We estimate capital expenditures over the next 5 years to exceed \$100 million dollars, with payroll contributions of \$50 million dollars per year. Additionally, the Air National Guard will continue to provide the fire and safety equipment supporting the joint use of the airport by both military and commercial operations.

In every generation, there is a small percentage of Americans who volunteer to protect the rest of us. "The Green Mountain Boys" have made that commitment. The Air Force appreciates the leaders of Vermont and their support for our Airmen and for the modernization of their equipment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heather Wilson". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Heather Wilson