

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2012

The Honorable Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
1690 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Secretary Donley:

On behalf of the Washington State delegation, we would like to extend our appreciation for the service and sacrifice made by the men, women, and families of the United States Air Force. In honor of their effort and service, we applaud the recently released diligent, timely, and thorough strategic basing criteria for the KC-46A aerial refueling tanker – a set of criteria that is exceptionally important to this critical mission and Fairchild Air Force Base in our home state of Washington.

Fairchild Air Force Base has been a historic part of our nation's aerial refueling effort and is well positioned to achieve global-level reach, especially to the emerging Asia-Pacific theater. The base is a strategic staging platform, supporting the rapid worldwide global mobility mission with access to a number of aerial refueling routes while minimizing transit fuel consumption. We believe the recently announced strategic basing criterion situates Fairchild Air Force Base in a very competitive position.

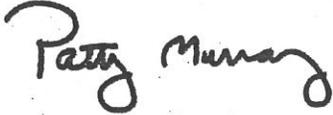
Currently, Fairchild is home to a classic association of the 92nd Air Refueling Wing with the Air National Guard 141st Air Refueling Wing. As we have previously illustrated, this association marries the best the active duty and reserve components have to offer, providing for world-class aerial refueling, airlift and aeromedical evacuation capabilities while fostering innovation and efficiency in operation. As you know, the Air Force also continues to recognize Fairchild Air Force Base's assets and has invested over \$400 million in base infrastructure over the last several decades.

To that end, Fairchild already possesses much of the needed capacity to accommodate the new KC-46A aerial refueling tanker as the Air Force has already improved the 14,000 foot runway, invested in a new, state-of-the-art fitness center, and last month broke ground on a new wing command headquarters that will better integrate active-duty Airmen and Air National Guardsmen. Furthermore, Fairchild Air Force Base provides an exceptional quality of life for its Airmen and the local community has embraced the base. It is a strongly desired duty station and is the second most requested Air Force assignment in the United States.

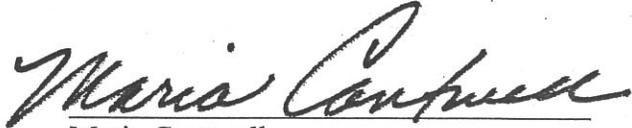
The Spokane community is an award winning, proud military community that embraces all military personnel, their families, and retirees and is worthy of hosting the KC-46A aerial refueling tankers.

We ask you to keep us briefed as the strategic basing process continues and look forward to working with you to base the new KC-46A tanker fleet at Fairchild Air Force Base.

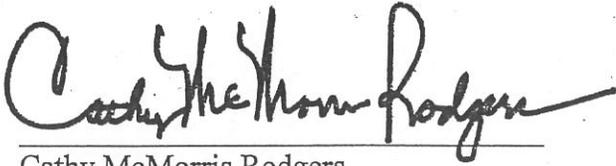
Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



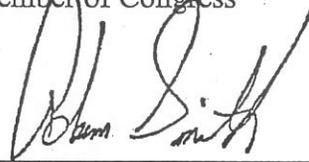
Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Norm Dicks
Member of Congress



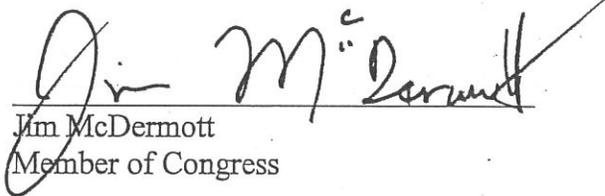
Doc Hastings
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Dave Reichert
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Cc: General Norton A. Schwartz, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force
General Raymond E. Johns Jr., Commander of Air Mobility Command
General Craig R. McKinley, Chief of National Guard Bureau