

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 17, 2013

The Honorable Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1400

Dear Secretary Donley:

On behalf of the Washington State delegation, we write to express our strongest support for basing the Air Force's new KC-46A aerial refueling tankers at Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, Washington.

We believe Fairchild's strategic location combined with its core strengths in capacity and the well-established association between the Air Force's 92nd Air Refueling Wing and the Air National Guard's 141st Air Refueling Wing make it the ideal first home of the new KC-46A aerial refueling tankers. Additionally, the Spokane community has demonstrated strong support for Fairchild and is actively taking steps to ensure that Fairchild's mission can continue for years to come.

Fairchild is in an optimal strategic position to maximize support for the KC-46A mission. The only base west of the Rocky Mountains to be considered for the first Main Operating Base for the KC-46A refueling tankers, Fairchild has the advantage of serving as a gateway to the Pacific Rim. With the Department of Defense rebalancing towards the Asia-Pacific region, Fairchild is the best positioned candidate base to support the spectrum of bilateral and multilateral training exercises, as well as possible contingency operations, in U.S. Pacific Command's area of responsibility.

Possessing much of the needed capacity to accommodate the new KC-46A aerial refueling tanker, the Air Force continues to recognize Fairchild's strategic value with a sustained campaign of infrastructure investments totaling more than \$400 million in the last several decades. These investments include an improved 14,000 foot runway, a new, state-of-the-art fitness center, and updated SERE facilities. Additionally, a new wing command headquarters designed to better integrate Fairchild's active-duty Airmen and Air National Guardsmen is currently under construction.

Fairchild is home to a classic association of the 92nd Air Refueling Wing with the Air National Guard 141st Air Refueling Wing. This association marries the best the active duty and guard components have to offer, providing for world-class aerial refueling, airlift and aeromedical evacuation capabilities while fostering innovation and efficiency in operation. Fairchild, as a base with a mature, high-performing association, is the model for the entire Air Mobility Community.

Fairchild has a long history with our nation's aerial refueling fleet. The important community support that Fairchild established in 1942 when the City of Spokane and local residents donated land for the base is alive today – with the community continuing to protect its servicemembers via the Joint Land Use Study and the Fairchild Air Force Base Protection and Community Empowerment Project which seeks to permanently reduce the residential density in Fairchild's Accident Potential Zone II. In addition, the State of Washington has demonstrated their commitment to support the continued viability of the installation by proposing \$2.7 million in the state's budget for the acquisition of land within the encroachment zone at Fairchild Air Force Base.

With its strategic location and ability to support the Pacific rebalance, investments in infrastructure, unparalleled classic association of the 92nd Air Refueling Wing and 141st Air Refueling Wing, and strong community support, we believe Fairchild is the strongest candidate to serve as the first Main Operating Base for the KC-46A. We appreciate the manner in which the Air Force has handled this strategic basing process and look forward to your consideration of Fairchild Air Force Base as a home for the new tanker fleet.

Sincerely,



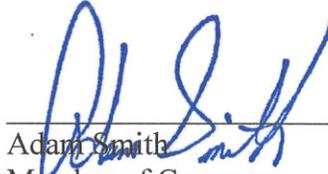
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



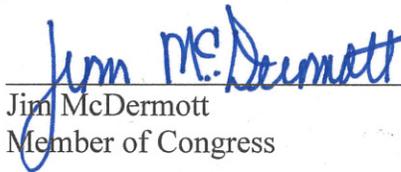
Doc Hastings
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



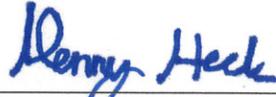
Dave Reichert
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



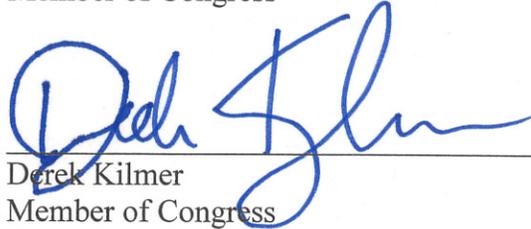
Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

Cc: General Mark A. Welsh, III, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force
General Paul J. Selva, Commander, Air Mobility Command
Lieutenant General Stanley E. Clark, III, Director, Air National Guard
The Honorable Kathleen Ferguson, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Installations,
Environment, and Logistics)