

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

March 14, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Disbrow  
Acting Secretary of the Air Force  
3000 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington D.C. 20350-1000

Dear Secretary Disbrow,

We write to express our support for the selection of Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, Washington, as the preferred alternative for the pending reassignment of 12 KC-135 Stratotanker aerial refueling tankers from McConnell Air Force Base.

Fairchild is the clear choice to receive these aerial refueling tankers because it meets and exceeds the basing criteria identified by the Air Force in its February 8, 2016 announcement about the reassignment. Fairchild possesses the requisite runway length, mission capability, infrastructure capacity, and other attributes that make it the most cost effective and strategic alternative for the reassignment of this squadron. Fairchild plays a vital and irreplaceable role in assuring the Air Force's global mobility and reach, and is positioned to become the nation's preeminent aerial refueling base.

As we have previously written, Fairchild is strategically located to support the Department of Defense's operations in the Asia-Pacific region, and is ideally positioned to support the spectrum of bilateral and multilateral training exercises, and contingency operations in the U.S. Pacific Command's area of responsibility. The base's location provides a decided advantage in shortening the distance to key staging bases in the Pacific. Fairchild is also within 100 nautical miles of numerous aerial refueling routes, which reduces the cost of en-route fuel and maximizes offload capabilities.

It is important to recognize that Fairchild already possesses significant infrastructure to accommodate additional tankers and related personnel. The base provides substantial runway, hangar, and ramp capacity, as well as four squadron operation and maintenance facilities. The Air Force has long recognized Fairchild's strategic importance by investing in its infrastructure, including more than \$400 million over the past several years alone. These investments, which include a runway replacement, a new wing headquarters, construction of a fitness center and funding for a new dormitory for its Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape school, together with its existing capacity and training facilities, will maximize the resources available to support associated personnel and allow the Air Force to relocate the 12 KC-135s efficiently and cost effectively.

Fairchild and the U.S. Air Force also enjoy strong community support for its missions and personnel. Spokane is home to Fairchild because, shortly after the start of World War II, Spokane businesses and public-minded citizens donated more than \$125,000 to purchase 1,400 acres that were presented to the War Department to build the Spokane Army Air Depot. The community has since remained a strong partner and supporter of the base, especially through the adoption of the Joint Land Use Study by both the City of Spokane and Spokane County, which prevents future incompatible land use and development in order to protect current and future missions. In 2012, Washington State convened the Washington Military Alliance, a coalition of military and defense-related public and private stakeholder organizations to strengthen collaborative efforts supporting our state's military and defense infrastructure.

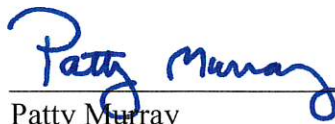
Fairchild is home to a classic association of the 92nd Air Refueling Wing with the Washington Air National Guard's 141st Air Refueling Wing. This association combines the expertise and efficiencies of both active duty and guard components, ensuring world-class aerial refueling, airlift, and aeromedical evacuation capabilities while fostering operational innovation and efficiency. The long-standing association at Fairchild has a demonstrated record of high performance that serves as a working model of the total Air Force and an example for the air mobility community.

Fairchild continues to be a vital location for the Air Force and a crucial base for national defense, the Air Force, and the State of Washington. Fairchild is the ideal candidate for the reassignment of the additional KC-135s because of its strategic location to support the Pacific operations, its infrastructure and capacity to cost-effectively accommodate this tanker, strong community support, and the mission expertise resulting from the classic association of the 92nd Air Refueling Wing and the 141st Air Refueling Wing. We encourage you to carefully consider these attributes and select Fairchild Air Force Base as the new location for this squadron of KC-135 tankers.

Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



Patty Murray  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator