



September 24, 2019

The Honorable Matthew P. Donovan  
Acting Secretary  
United States Air Force  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington DC, 20330

Dear Secretary Donovan,

I represent the 76<sup>th</sup> State Assembly District of Wisconsin, which contains some of the communities most negatively impacted by the proposal to commission F-35 jets at the Truax Air National Guard Base in Madison, Wisconsin. I am writing to you to request: 1) a 60-day extension of the public comment period currently ending Friday, September 27; and 2) a revised Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to address serious omissions in the original draft of critically important information our community needs to fully assess the impact of F-35s based at Truax.

The Air Force has failed to conduct adequate outreach to the most impacted communities throughout this process, including to communities of color, low-income individuals and families with children. For example, the draft EIS has not been made available in any language other than English, despite the fact that many of the impacted neighborhoods have larger than average populations of non-native English speakers. Hawthorne Elementary, which is in close proximity to one of the neighborhoods where noise from the F-35 is projected to reach 114 dB, has approximately 34% English Language Learners, 67.9% low-income students and 74.3% students of color. It is critical that information from the draft EIS be made available in at least Spanish and Hmong.

It is also critical that the Air Force hold an additional public hearing in an impacted community. The September 12<sup>th</sup> Open House was many miles away from the communities most impacted, leaving community members without automobiles unable to participate without a lengthy bus trip. One of the Points of Interest identified in the EIS is Ridgeway Church, which the EIS predicts will experience up to 114 dB from the F-35s. This church and the surrounding impacted community is over nine miles from the Alliant Energy Center and requires nearly an hour-long bus ride. The community impacted deserves to be heard in their community.

Further, there is conflicting and contrary information publicly circulating. Corporate interests pushing the F-35 proposal have argued that this draft EIS is the worst case scenario for the communities impacted, yet the City of Madison's own analysis indicates that the number of people impacted and the impact on communities of color is underestimated given the methodology used by the U.S. Air Force. These same business groups also argue that the decision to base F-35s at Truax is a "done deal," and the public's voice will not be considered. Though the Air Force's own process in facilitating and considering public comments repudiates

these statements, it is confusing to the public. These are just a few examples of confusing, contradictory information circulating that makes it difficult for the public to fully assess the proposal.

Recent correspondence to the U.S. Air Force from elected officials across the board raise significant questions that the public deserves to be answered before the public comment period closes on Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup>. These officials include U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, whose letter was dated August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, and U.S. Representative Mark Pocan, whose letter was dated September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019, in addition to other state and local officials that represent the communities that will be directly impacted. Senator Baldwin has submitted questions to the Secretary of the Air Force, Representative Pocan has called for a flight demonstration, and other officials, including City of Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, Madison Alders and Dane County Supervisors, have called for more information on the direct impacts the F-35 proposal will have on our community. There must be a response to these concerns before this process can move forward.

As important, the draft EIS is missing critical information to which the public should be afforded an opportunity to respond. Key pieces of information, including some data points included in a prior EIS prepared for the Burlington, Vermont community, are omitted. I request that a revised EIS include:

- Peak decibel levels when taking off and landing for both the current F-16s and anticipated for the F-35s. Nowhere in the draft EIS does it list peak decibel levels for takeoffs and landings of the F-35s. Instead, the Air Force uses Day, Night, Average Sound Levels (DNL) which do not accurately convey how much of a disruption the F-35s will cause when in use. U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan released a statement echoing these concerns just last week.
- Anticipated SEL measures for the F-35s for all daycares, preschools and K-12 schools within the 65 dB contour and within one mile of the border of this contour;
- A recalculation of the noise impact and sound maps with afterburner usage estimated at 10%, 25%, 50%, and above. A leaked Air Force memo indicates that afterburner usage is being significantly underestimated. As a result, as indicated in the memo, the Air Force is delaying the release of an Arizona EIS. Like Arizona, Wisconsin also deserves to have this information, and I am perplexed as to why this isn't available to our state.
- A direct comparison between the peak noise decibel levels of the F-16s currently at the Truax Base and the proposed F-35s for both military power takeoff and landing, and afterburner takeoff and landing for each aircraft type. My community needs this comparison to more adequately have an idea about expected noise increases by the F-35s.
- A substantial analysis of the economic impact on the local economy in the draft EIS. There is insufficient information on how this proposal could diminish property values, the costs to Dane County taxpayers or the impact on our area businesses.

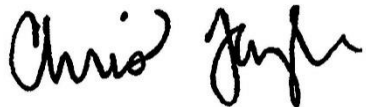
- More information about the physical and cognitive effects of intense noise on children, including children with developmental challenges. The EIS identifies a disparate impact on children, and we need to know the impact on children that this kind of intense noise present.

Given the confusing and conflicting information generated by the F-35 proposal, the lack of efforts to reach marginalized communities and a fair chance for these communities to weigh in, and the absence of key pieces of information to enable the public to fully evaluate this proposal, which has been highlighted by numerous correspondence by elected officials, the public deserves a 60-day extension to submit their comments about this proposal. Further, I am requesting a revised EIS that fully addresses the critical pieces of information omitted from the EIS that must be provided by the Air Force. This is the only fair, equitable way to proceed for our Madison community.

I appreciate your consideration and urge that you grant my requests.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Chris Taylor  
76th Assembly District