

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 21, 2017

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

RE: Florida Congressional Delegation Support the Relocation of 12 KC-135s to MacDill Air Force Base
-MacDill Means Mobility

Dear Secretary Disbrow,

We write in strong support of relocating 12 KC-135 Stratotankers from McConnell Air Force Base to MacDill Air Force Base (AFB) in Tampa, Florida. MacDill AFB and the 6th Air Mobility Wing play a critical role in America's national security mission and Air Force Air Mobility operations. As you consider mission factors, installation capacity, environmental impacts, costs and military judgement, we believe you will see that MacDill AFB is an ideal choice.

MacDill's 6th Air Mobility Wing is central to the U.S. Air Force's Global Vigilance, Global Reach, Global Power mission through the essential functions of aerial refueling and airlift while also providing secondary support to our strategic partners around the globe. MacDill Air Force Base is a natural and strategic location for an expanded Air Mobility mission because it serves critical Air Force missions along the eastern seaboard with a vital orientation toward the Central Command area of operation ("AOC") in the Middle East, and toward the Western Hemisphere. The intensity and tempo of operations in the Central Command AOC show no sign of easing and MacDill is best-suited to project Air Mobility assets into that region.

MacDill also has been the leading jumping-off point for Air Force air lift and MEDEVAC support during humanitarian and natural disasters in the Caribbean, Latin America and the southeastern United States. Additionally, MacDill's location in Tampa Bay has close access to ranges, including Avon Park Air Force Range and numerous overwater ranges in the Gulf of Mexico. MacDill is also well placed to support the air refueling requirements for the extensive Air Force and Navy assets in the southeast. Because the base is located on a peninsula, infringement is minimal. Clear skies in Florida consistently cooperate with flight missions.

In addition to the 6th Air Mobility Wing, MacDill is home 27 vital mission partners, including the 927th Air Refueling Wing, U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command. Integrated base personnel include over 12,000 active duty and civilian employees that make all the missions on base successful. Additionally, the Tampa area has about 170,000 veterans who depend on the base for many necessary services. MacDill and indeed our entire community are focused and committed.

Eight additional tankers and their highly-skilled personnel already are scheduled to arrive this year so the time is right to build on that momentum and expand the wing. MacDill's location,

infrastructure capacity and current layout give the base plenty of room to grow. The ramp capacity allows for ample room for many more tanker aircraft and the runway was recently resurfaced. Much of the base infrastructure has been improved as well. A new hydrant system was added to the existing ramp and it was designed to facilitate larger, more modern aircraft. In addition, the fuel storage and pipeline for fuel from Port Tampa Bay was included in the planning if the hydrant system has to be increased for additional aircraft.

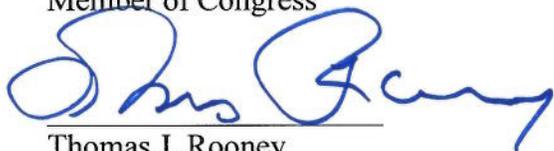
Tampa Bay has had the privilege to host the brave and talented Air Force service members at MacDill for more than 75 years. The base was activated in 1941 to train World War II airmen to fly and operate bombers, including the B-17 Flying Fortress and the B-26 Marauder. While MacDill has seen a number of missions over its lifetime, the 30-plus years the base has been home to the 6th Air Mobility Wing and the KC-135 tankers have been some of its most successful. Given its long and storied presence in Tampa Bay, community support for the service members and their families is renowned. In 2012, local leaders, including the Tampa Bay Defense Alliance, the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce, the Tampa Bay Congressional Delegation and Mayor, came together in the *MacDill Means Mobility* effort to highlight MacDill's significance in both the critical mobility mission of the Air Force and the national security of our nation. These local supporters have been indispensable partners in providing information, insight and advocating for MacDill and the personnel who serve on base. MacDill and the City of Tampa have worked together on many projects including the recent partnership between the base and Tampa Fire and Rescue to provide advanced lifesaving support for base personnel. Importantly for saving lives in the military and our local community, and something that underscores the incredibly strong connection between the base and the Tampa Bay community, Tampa General Hospital (TGH) provides AMC surgeons opportunities to keep current on trauma treatment through access to TGH's unique level 1 trauma center. This type of partnership is unavailable in almost any other area.

MacDill remains a central economic driver and source of good paying jobs for Tampa Bay residents. Most importantly for this rebasing decision, MacDill is strategically located to extend the global reach of U.S. air power through global Air Mobility operations. Our central Florida community embraces this mission. In facing our nation's ongoing and future national security challenges, we believe MacDill should and is poised to play an even more vital role in protecting the safety of our families and all America. We strongly support MacDill as the preferred alternative for the 12 KC-135s relocating out of McConnell AFB. Thank you for your consideration and if you have any questions or comments, please contact U.S. Rep. Castor's Legislative Director, Elizabeth Brown, at 202-225-3376.

Sincerely,



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Thomas J. Rooney
Member of Congress



Bill Nelson
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Charlie Crist
Member of Congress



Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Dennis A. Ross
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress

Cc: Gen. Carlton D. Everhart II, Commander, Air Mobility Command
Col. April D. Vogel, Commander, 6th Air Mobility Wing