

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

September 25, 2019

The Honorable Matthew Donovan  
Acting Secretary of the Air Force  
1665 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20330

Dear Acting Secretary Donovan:

As the Air Force develops the enterprise definition for F-35 Operational Locations 9-11, we write to respectfully urge you to include Air National Guard installations that operate F-15 C/D Eagles. Recently, Dr. Roper testified before the House Armed Services Committee that more than two thirds of the F-15 C fleet is past its service life. This reality, coupled with the recent maintenance and sustainment challenges resulting in the grounding of many F-15Cs, requires a quick recapitalization to support our national defense.

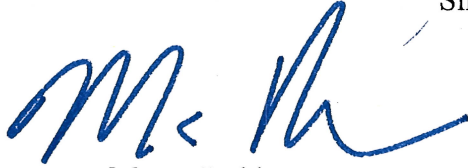
A Florida installation would be an ideal home for these aircraft, their mission, and the personnel who will operate and maintain them. As you know, the Florida Air National Guard's 125<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing currently flies the F-15 C/D Eagles and is critical to the air defense mission for the southeastern United States. Because of its strategic location and access to unparalleled training infrastructure and airspace, including direct access to overwater operating areas without land overflight, the 125<sup>th</sup> is one of our nation's premiere homeland defense wings. As we see increased threats from adversaries, it is critical that the aircraft operated by the 125<sup>th</sup> is recapitalized with the most capable fighters.

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter's mission is to provide complete battlespace domination in the form of electronic attack; air-to-surface stealth; air-to-air supremacy; and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance world-wide in support of national defense objectives; in conjunction with other airborne assets within the Air Force inventory; some of which already reside in Florida. Basing these aircraft systems in close proximity will optimize training and operations efficiencies. Additionally, the 125<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing has twice been a finalist for F-35 basing. The City of Jacksonville and the State of Florida have a long history of supporting our installations, including unmatched quality of life and reduced encroachment issues.

With increased procurement from Congress, and the increased F-15C sustainment challenges, we believe the Air Force will understand the urgent requirement to equip the 125<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing with the most capable fifth-generation fighter.

We look forward to the Air Force executing its strategic basing process and standby to assist in any way.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator



John H. Rutherford  
U.S. Representative



Matt Gaetz  
U.S. Representative



Michael Waltz  
U.S. Representative



Mario Diaz-Balart  
U.S. Representative