

Badger Air Community Council: F-35 beddown process continues to move forward

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MADISON - The United States Air Force has posted the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Air National Guard F-35A Operational Beddown on its website <http://www.angf35eis.com>. This is the final step in a lengthy process for selecting the 115th Fighter Wing as the next location for an F-35 mission.

The Secretary of the United States Air Force will sign the Record of Decision, following a 30-day waiting period, no sooner than March 30th.

In the Final EIS, the 115th Fighter Wing remains the preferred alternative for the 5th Operational Beddown and the 187th Fighter Wing in Montgomery, Alabama is the preferred alternative for the 6th Operational Beddown.

In response to the release, Chairman of the Badger Air Community Council (BACC) Board of Directors Marvin Siegert released the following statement:

“We are excited that our friends and neighbors who serve in the Wisconsin Air National Guard are one step closer to receiving this mission and carrying on the 72-year legacy of the 115th Fighter Wing in Madison. We are also very grateful for the overwhelming community engagement and support in this very lengthy process.”

Over 4,500 individuals have registered their support on the Together Truax website. There has been overwhelming and broad bipartisan support from the members of Wisconsin’s congressional delegation, Wisconsin’s State Legislature and local leaders. The Wisconsin State Legislature adopted a resolution (2019 Senate Joint Resolution 69) with near unanimous support, 119 in support-10 opposed. The Dane

County communities surrounding the flight path; the City of Sun Prairie and villages of Windsor, DeForest and Waunakee all passed unanimous resolutions in support of the 115th Fighter Wing and their selection for the F-35 mission. The community newspaper of record, the Wisconsin State Journal, has editorialized in support, as have other editors and columnists. And the 115th Fighter Wing has the overwhelming support of the community's business and civic leaders.

The F-35 mission would maintain and enhance the economic impact of the 115th Fighter Wing by continuing its \$100 million of economic output, 1,650 in-state jobs and creating 64 new jobs. The F-35 mission would also provide up to \$120 million in improvements to the Dane County Regional Airport and create hundreds of construction jobs.

Executive Director of the BACC, and former pilot at the 115th Fighter Wing, Chris "Desi" Arenz released the following statement:

"The purpose of the EIS is to identify the maximum potential for changes in impact because of the new mission. Now that the EIS is finalized, and once the Record of Decision is signed, work will begin between the Fighter Wing, our federal, state and local government partners and the community to address and mitigate any potential impacts.

The 115th Fighter Wing has a 72-year history of being an active outstanding community partner, and we look forward to continuing this partnership into the future with the new mission."

Included in the newly released Final EIS and attached documents are a few new points of note:

Nuclear capability;

The F-35A Block 3F aircraft is not "nuclear-capable"; therefore, the F-35A aircraft that would be based at any of these five alternative locations would not have the hardware necessary for a nuclear mission. There are no plans to add the hardware necessary to make these F-35A aircraft nuclear-capable at this time. Only units with a nuclear mission are provided the hardware necessary to carry nuclear weapons; therefore, because none of these five alternatives have a nuclear mission, should

any of the aircraft associated with this F-35A beddown ever be fitted with Block 4 upgrades, they still would not be nuclear-capable. (Page ES-15, Final EIS Executive Summary)

Noise levels driven by number flights;

In a letter to US Senator Tammy Baldwin, Acting Secretary of the Air Force Matthew P. Donovan answers a series of questions from Senator Baldwin that explains that the impact the number of flights has on the noise contours. Because the EIS conservatively estimates 100% of initial flights will take place from Truax it increases the proposed noise impacts. However, they note the actual flight operations, when the pilots are certified, should be very similar to historic operations, shrinking back the noise contours. (Volume 2 of Final EIS; Appendix A pages 271-272)

For additional information please visit the Together Truax website www.togethertruax.com to learn more about the community support for the mission. To learn more about the Badger Air Community Council please visit www.badgerair.org.