

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2020

The Honorable Barbara M. Barrett
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Barrett:

As the Air Force continues its strategic basing process to replace Air National Guard (ANG) C-130H3s with C-130Js, we strongly endorse the selection of the 165th Airlift Wing (AW) at the Savannah Air National Guard Base to be the first unit chosen for this important aircraft transition. Providing flawless tactical airlift since 1973, we believe the 165th AW is clearly the appropriate choice based on the four stated Air Force criteria for this selection decision: mission, capacity, environmental impact, and cost.

Ideally suited to support the National Defense Strategy, the 165th AW is geo-strategically located on the southeastern coast of the U.S. in close proximity to other ANG units and to critical joint bases, including Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield, Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, Jacksonville Naval Air Station, Fort Benning, Fort Bragg, and Moody Air Force Base. Savannah Air National Guard Base also facilitates ease of access to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, the busiest airport in the world, and the Port of Savannah, the nation's 4th largest and fastest growing port, providing unmatched logistics and supply chain infrastructure. Additionally, the 165th AW is ideally located to support the Puerto Rico ANG's new combat support mission, which requires air transport to provide combat communications and assist in contingency response in areas of need. Savannah includes runways over 9,000 and 11,000 feet in length, and the region includes multiple large, open air corridors. In fact, the area's FAA designated Special Use Airspace represents one of the few regions in the country where 5th generation fighter aircraft can train.

We also note that the 165th AW is collocated with the Air Dominance Center (ADC) and a future Agile Combat Employment training center. The base and the ADC include state-of-the-art operations and maintenance facilities that include two ramps, parking capacity that can park over 20 C-130Js or over 40 fighter aircraft, hangars to accommodate fuel and maintenance functions, and logistics facilities suitable for terminal/deployment operations and supply. The ADC has a billeting capacity of over 700 beds and hosts the Sentry Savannah exercises, which provide critical training opportunities to the Air National Guard. Additionally, Savannah has a five thousand square foot Top Secret Facility (SCIF/SAPF) with JWICS circuits.

Savannah's temperate climate is conducive to full spectrum training and operations 24/7/365. Over the last five years, the 165th AW has operated extensively in support of federal response missions throughout the United States and in the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as missions overseas. The 165th AW is the nearest tactical airlift wing to the islands of the eastern Caribbean and western Atlantic, and it is often called upon to assist in

hurricane response efforts. For example, Savannah Air National Guard Base became a critical hub for hurricane relief efforts for Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria.

With the Savannah area's popular amenities and very low cost of living, the region is replete with military families. Accordingly, the 165th AW has maintained an astounding retention rate of more than 96.4 percent, and aircrew and operational support specialties are manned at 110% of requirements – which represents the highest level in the ANG C-130H enterprise.

The 165th AW consistently ranks in the top three in ANG mission capable ratings and it has established the Benchmark Maintenance Standardization and Evaluation Program (MSEP), resulting in the 2017 AMC designation as “Best Seen to Date.” The Savannah Air National Guard Base has little to no environmental impacts or operational restrictions, minimizing any military construction costs connected to any recapitalization of C-130Js to the base. The 165th AW has also tasked key personnel with assisting in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, with medical personnel supporting hospitals in Albany, Atlanta and Macon, Infectious Control Teams working with elderly care facilities, and other critical missions in support of the country's virus mitigation efforts.

Our Savannah area Airmen and families are actively supported by the Coastal Georgia Military Affairs Coalition, which includes elected officials and community leaders from three counties, two cities, two chambers of commerce, three economic development authorities, and multiple businesses.

Thank you for your longstanding service to our Air Force and our nation, and we appreciate your consideration of the unique qualifications for the 165th AW to transition to C-130Js.

Kindest Regards,



David A. Perdue
United States Senator



Kelly Loeffler
United States Senator



Earl L. “Buddy” Carter
United States Congressman