

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 21, 2012

The Honorable Michael Donley
Secretary
United States Air Force
The Pentagon
Washington DC 20318

Dear Secretary Donley:

We are strongly opposed to the United States Air Force's proposal which would relocate the 136th Airlift Wing's 8 C-130s. This proposal is not in the best interest of either the war fighter or the taxpayer. There is no justification for moving the assets of a well functioning and experienced unit to establish the exact same capability in a state with none of this experience and cohesion or any ties to states that traditionally require these assets for emergency response.

At a time when the entire federal government, to include the Department of Defense, is making significant budget cuts, the unnecessary cost to taxpayers in military construction, additional training and operational requirements is unacceptable and ill advised. In addition to the \$3 million earmarked in the FY13 budget for temporary C-130 shelters, the Air Force will spend \$80 million on military construction and an estimated \$20 million in training costs to move these aircraft out of Texas. Such a large waste of taxpayer dollars can be avoided by immediately reversing this decision and leaving the C-130s in the Texas Air National Guard so they can continue to provide outstanding support to the State of Texas, Gulf Coast States and the nation.

Texas and the Gulf Coast are under constant threat of hurricanes, wildfires and floods. Our C-130s have answered the call to support Texas and our neighbors to respond to natural disasters at a moment's notice. The Governor of Texas can mobilize and deploy these C-130s in a matter of hours through Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) agreements while support from the federal government could take days. Since 2005 the Texas Air Guard C-130s have flown 423 storm response sorties, carrying 3,143 passengers and delivering 939 tons of much needed emergency supplies along the Gulf Coast. During Hurricanes Ike and Gustav these aircraft evacuated 800 hospital and nursing home patients prior to landfall, a successful "first" in the United States.

The 136th Airlift Wing is one of the most proven and capable airlift organizations in the Air Force and is vital to state and regional hurricane and other emergency responses. Losing the Wing's C-130s takes away a powerful airlift asset for saving the lives of citizens along the Gulf Coast and removes this capability from the nation's inventory for approximately two years as new facilities are built and crews are trained in another state.

The 136th Airlift Wing has a proven record of performance and is a significant asset to the nation in support of global military operations. Since 9/11 the unit has conducted 6,536 combat and 1,321 combat support sorties during deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Prior to 9/11 the wing conducted successful operations in the Balkans, Somalia, Haiti, Iraq, Kuwait, and Panama. All of this while maintaining one of the best safety records in the Air Force executing over 176,000 flying hours without a major accident.

We appreciate your prompt attention to the concerns we have raised. Thank you for your service to the men and women of United States Air Force and our nation.

Sincerely,

Kay George
John Cornyn

K. Mitt Long
Pete Lehman

Blake Farnthold

Rubin Hinojosa

Bill Flores

Gene Huelskamp

Kay Bailey Hutchison
Sam Johnson

Pat Roberts
Joe Barton

Lamar Smith

~~Wendell Liebman~~

Randy Neugebauer

Eddie Bernice Johnson

John Fuller

John Cameron

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Pat Olin

John Chynoweth

RF BARR

John Henshaw

Chas A. Ziegler

Kenny Marshall

Pep Semons

John R. Carter

John Anderson

Wm. T. McCard

Ralph M. Hall

Ed Green

Mac Why

Don Paul

John Dorsett