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WATER RESOURCES
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2210

September 14, 2013

National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force
1950 Defense Pentagon
Room 3A874
Washington, DC 20301-1950

Dear Commissioners:

I welcome the Commission to Selfridge Air National Guard Base (ANGB), the 127th Wing of the Michigan Air National Guard, of which I am so proud to represent in the United States House of Representatives.

This Commission has been tasked by Congress to study the structure of the Air Force in order to determine whether, and how, the structure should be modified to best fulfill current and future mission requirements for the Air Force. I am certain that after you have concluded your important work that you will come to the conclusion that the Air National Guard is vitally important in keeping our Air Force strong far into the future.

At Selfridge ANGB, you will find some of the most dedicated men and women serving our nation in every aspect of national security and homeland security. Your time at Selfridge ANGB will also show that the Air National Guard is not only one of the most capable elements of the Air Force but also one of the most cost-effective. I welcome the opportunity to provide my observations as to how Selfridge ANGB contributes to this smarter way of doing business which is so important during these tight budgetary times, and how innovative thinking is put into action at a base which is truly a model for joint actions by the Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security tenants. Team Selfridge is more than a slogan; here National Defense and Homeland Security are woven together to protect our great nation.

Since the time of our revolution which brought freedom and the birth of our nation, the citizen militia has responded at a moment's notice to defend liberty. Well before we had a large standing army, citizen-soldiers provided the bulk of our armed forces when the nation went to war. Today, the National Guard continues the tradition of the minuteman, ready to serve both the Governor of their individual states for homeland defense, disaster recovery and other state missions as well as train and prepare for combat at the call of the President to defend the nation.

Since September 11, 2001, the value of the National Guard has been shown clearly as they have stood shoulder to shoulder with their active duty counterparts, which enabled the country to

prosecute two wars simultaneously. They have served with distinction in Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, as well as Operation Odyssey Dawn.

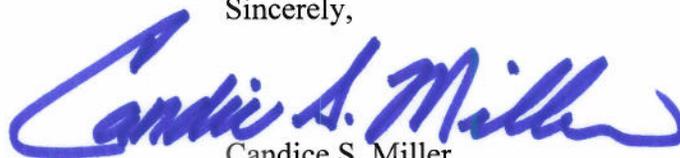
Without question, this nation would not have been able to maintain the high operational tempo required to support those operations without the infusion of manpower and assets from Guard units around the nation. In countless instances, men and women of the Guard willingly volunteered to take the fight to the enemy – and many have made the ultimate sacrifice.

It is no secret that the nation's fiscal situation is dire; cost efficiencies must be found and waste and duplication must be reduced in every department and program across the government. We are cognizant of the need for shared sacrifice across the nation and among the active duty, Guard and reserve components of the Air Force. Selfridge ANGB has demonstrated its ability to adapt, particularly in difficult economic circumstances. Having first been established as an Army airfield to train pilots during World War I, Selfridge then became an active duty Air Force base and, most recently, transitioned to an Air National Guard Base in the early 1970s. From F-16s and C-130s to KC-135s and A-10s, Selfridge has proven its ability to always serve the Air Force regardless of the mission. Additionally, Selfridge also has a beneficial relationship with the U.S. Coast Guard and the Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Wing, which demonstrates its continued ability to evolve to new and emerging threats both abroad and at home.

Threats to the nation are often asymmetric and require novel solutions that fall outside of a traditional Department of Homeland Security or Department of Defense response. The presence of both at Selfridge offer national leaders the capability and flexibility as they work to secure the nation. It is this interagency relationship that makes Selfridge truly a one-of-a-kind base and could serve as a model for the entire military.

In closing, I would like to reiterate how important our Airmen and Airwomen are to this state and to this country. Regardless if they serve in the Active Duty, Reserve, or Air National Guard, these individuals bring a sense of duty, loyalty and talent that makes our nation stronger, and you will find no better examples of our great citizen soldiers than those based right here at Selfridge. As you listen to their stories about the brave service they have provided to the cause of freedom, I am certain those stories will inform you well in determining what is best for the future of the Air Force. Again, welcome to Selfridge and I wish you luck in your important work.

Sincerely,



Candice S. Miller
Member of Congress