SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

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A RESOLUTION

Urging the Secretary of the United States Air Force, the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, and the Commander of the Pacific Air Forces to base F-35 aircraft assigned to the Pacific Air Forces at Eielson Air Force Base.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS the United States Air Force, as a matter of critical importance, will soon decide where to base its F-35 aircraft within the Asia-Pacific theater of operations; and

WHEREAS the United States Air Force recently, based on the best interests of the United States National Security Strategy, decided to forego the proposed relocation of the 18th Aggressor Squadron's F-16 aircraft from Eielson Air Force Base; and

WHEREAS the citizens of Alaska commend the United States Air Force's leadership on the decision not to relocate the 18th Aggressor Squadron; and

WHEREAS the strengths of Eielson Air Force Base are consistently recognized by the Pacific Air Forces, the United States Pacific Command, and the United States Air Force's joint and coalition partners around the world; and

WHEREAS Eielson Air Force Base plays an essential role in the successful execution

of the United States national security strategy by enabling United States military assets to reach 95 percent of the industrial world within nine hours; and

WHEREAS aircraft placed at Eielson Air Force Base are a substantial asset to the Pacific Air Forces and the United States Pacific Command; and

WHEREAS Eielson Air Force Base serves a critical function in reinforcing the Pacific region and defending the Asia-Pacific theater; and

WHEREAS Eielson Air Force Base, as the guarantor of the North-Pacific air refueling bridge through the KC-135 aerial tankers of the 168th Air Refueling Wing, is at the forefront of protecting the United States' interests in the event of conflict in the Pacific region; and

WHEREAS Eielson Air Force Base is the ideal installation at which to base F-35 aircraft in the Asia-Pacific theater; and

WHEREAS F-35 aircraft are planned to replace A-10 aircraft in providing air-to-ground mission support for ground forces; and

WHEREAS Fort Wainwright is home to significant Army combat maneuver forces, which require joint, air-to-ground support training; and

WHEREAS Eielson Air Force Base provides a gateway to the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex; and

WHEREAS basing F-35 aircraft at Eielson Air Force Base would further benefit military service members from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Fort Wainwright, and our allies around the world who train at the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex; and

WHEREAS Eielson Air Force Base has unfettered access to an unparalleled training environment and the largest restricted training airspace in the United States; and

WHEREAS Eielson Air Force Base anchors the world's largest joint air, land, sea, subsea, space, and electromagnetic training assets; enjoys minimal airspace congestion throughout Alaska; and enables joint training venues that support large Army-Navy-Air Force live-fire exercises, force-on-force training, unmanned aerial vehicle operations, and supersonic flights; and

WHEREAS Eielson Air Force Base has a storage capacity for 24,000,000 gallons of jet fuel and its runway can provide year-round handling for the largest aircraft of the United States, its military allies and strategic partners; and

WHEREAS Eielson Air Force Base helps to secure important oil infrastructure, including the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, which supplies a significant portion of the nation's energy needs; and

WHEREAS, as a self-contained base, Eielson Air Force Base produces its own heat and electricity from locally mined coal, uses its own water supply and water treatment facility, and obtains jet fuel directly from a dedicated refinery; and

WHEREAS, as compared to overseas Pacific installations, Eielson Air Force Base is more cost-effective to maintain; and

WHEREAS Eielson Air Force Base supports the ground-based midcourse defense system; and

WHEREAS Eielson Air Force Base employs approximately 2,500 military personnel and has an annual economic effect of approximately $252,000,000, making it a critical component of the local and regional economies of Interior Alaska; and

WHEREAS Alaska citizens have continually proven their support of all military service members; and

WHEREAS Alaskans salute and respect all military service members;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature strongly urges the Secretary of the United States Air Force, the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, and the Commander of the Pacific Air Forces to base F 35 aircraft at Eielson Air Force Base.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Deborah Lee James, Secretary of the United States Air Force; General Mark A. Welsh III, Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force; and General Herbert J. Carlisle, Commander of the Pacific Air Forces.