



Fairbanks North Star Borough

Office of the Mayor

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January 30, 2014

The Honorable John Coghill
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol
Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Coghill:

I register my strong support for Senate Joint Resolution No. 14. The Resolution clearly and succinctly “hits the bulls eye” for why the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter should be assigned to Eielson Air Force Base (AFB). Last year the Fairbanks North Star Borough and State of Alaska successfully defended Eielson AFB against a proposed relocation of the 18th Aggressor Squadron and its F-16 Fighting Falcons. For all intents and purposes, the proposed action would have closed the base. The successful effort focused on Eielson AFB’s strategic location, unique ability to satisfy critical national security requirements, and joint training assets that are unmatched anywhere in the world. While the immediate result is retention of the F-16s, the decision was not an endorsement of a particular aircraft. However, the decision was a confirmation that Eielson AFB is vitally important in the U.S. military’s strategic shift focused on the Asia-Pacific Theater.

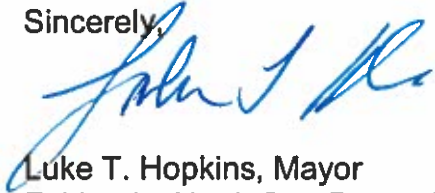
The Resolution correctly and appropriately addresses the impacts of the action to station the F-35 at Eielson AFB such as: the Joint Strike Fighter is the future U.S. Air Force air-to-ground aircraft in the Asia-Pacific Theater and a growing number of allies; effective training with other 5th generation aircraft, allied air forces, and both U.S. and allied ground forces will be essential to the successful employment of the F-35 during joint, combined and coalition operations; the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) and associated air, land and sea training venues in-and-around interior Alaska offers the world’s largest multi-domain training venue; stationing the F-35s at Eielson AFB provides unequalled opportunities to support robust air and air-ground training with the significant Army combat maneuver forces at Fort Wainwright; and there is no other installation in the Asia-Pacific Theater that offers as cost effective a location as Eielson AFB.

Strategic location, unmatched joint and combined-arms training opportunities and the most “bang for the buck” in Pacific Command make Eielson AFB the best, most effective and most affordable home for the Pacific Air Force’s Joint Strike Fighters. I urge swift passage of Senate Joint Resolution No. 14 and its immediate transmission to Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James; Chief of Staff Mark A. Welsh III; and General Herbert J. Carlisle, Commander, Pacific Air Forces.

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Thank you for your continuing support of Interior Alaska as the home of the Joint Strike Fighter. The nation, the U.S. Air Force, Pacific Air Forces, U.S. Pacific Command and our Asian allies need the F-35 assigned to Eielson AFB.

Sincerely,



Luke T. Hopkins, Mayor
Fairbanks North Star Borough

cc: Interior Delegation