

To: United States Airforce, F-35A Operational Beddown-Air National Guard

Environmental Impact Statement-Issued October 23, 2019

I write on behalf of the Madison Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, Sorority Inc., to lend our opposition to F-35A Operational Beddown.  It is our position that to allow for the F-35 to be built at the Madison Truax location would have a detrimental impact and cause irreversible harm to low income and people of color who live in and around the 65db curve. We have reviewed the Draft Environmental Statement and The City Staff Memo & Maps on F-35 Environmental Impact Statements and therefore offer the following comments and concerns.

Our first and foremost concern is for the children and families who will be adversely impacted of those who live in and around this facility. It has been reported report that the increase in noise exposure near the airport would disproportionately impact low-income areas and the increase in noise exposure would disproportionately impact low-income minority population. The City's analysis state that long-term, flights are expected to increase from 2,400 to approximately 3,061 annually based on flight time requirements and average flight length, a 27% increase. In addition, we understand that the transition time, between 11Fw's to the F-35 flight could increase 47% from the current levels in this community. While this transition is taking place our young children and low income families who are the most marginalized and vulnerable citizens in the Madison area.

Notably, the EIS does not address whether F35s based at Truax would carry nuclear weapons. It is well know that F35s are designed to carry a wide range of combat weapons, and could eventually carry nuclear weapons.  The Madison Common Council has gone on record opposing the presence of nuclear weapons, first declaring Madison a nuclear free zoning in 1983 and reaffirming such, in August of 2019.

We also believe the health concerns and consequences associated with noise exposure is worth highlighting.  Health impacts associated with long term exposure to noise levels similar to those expected from the F35s, include: sleep disturbance, decreased school performance, increased levels of stress, hearing impairment, annoyance, hypertension, and heart disease.  Although we understand that there would be funding for sound mitigation,  said monies presumably would not be applicable to residential units and structures outside of the 65db DNL contour lines, which include subsidized housing units, the Madison College campus and the Hawthorne Elementary School.

We also are concerned regarding the EIS's demographic data and criteria which was used.  While the 50% minority rate may be a national standard for environmental impact statements, it appears to be a very high bar for measuring impacts on communities of color particularly in Madison and Dane County, where persons of color make up 26% and 20% of the population, respectively. Using this metric, the only block groups flagged for having a minority population are west of the airport, generally outside the 65 db curve. Nearly every impacted area within the City of Madison belongs to a census tract with rates of persons of color well above the city- and county-wide averages.

In Wisconsin, 30% of African American families live in poverty. Only 18% of our third graders are proficient or advanced in reading. Our families are 27 times more likely to be homeless than white families. The typical Black household could only afford to rent in two areas, and this economically challenged and socially disenfranchised area, is one chosen. We find it deplorable that greater consideration hasn't been factored in as to how this decision will adversely affect said families. This is certainly a clear example of how Environmental injustices across our nation affect the disenfranchised. We in essence adamantly oppose this choice. Thank you for the time taken to consider our position.

Sincerely,

Yolanda Shelton-Morris, Chapter President

Madison Alumnae Chapter

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.,