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January 22, 2020

Senator Tammy Baldwin
30 West Mifflin Street, Suite 700
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Senator Baldwin:

The Marquette Neighborhood Association (MNA) opposes the Operational Beddown of F-35A fighter jets at Truax Field Air National Guard Base for many reasons, just a few of which are discussed below.

Destruction of Neighborhoods

The presence of F-35s at Truax will lead to the displacement of thousands of residents and will cause a significant loss in real estate value and harm to the tax base. According to the EIS, 1019 households will become "incompatible with residential use." Research conducted by a local real estate company, Solidarity Realty, revealed that the assessed values of those properties alone amounts to \$255,000,000. <https://www.safeskiescleanwaterwi.org/madison-real-estate-firm-tallies-f35-affected-property-values/> That figure does not include properties that will be adversely affected by the F-35s but have not been officially deemed "incompatible" for use. The EIS specifically recognizes that the operational beddown will affect disproportionately low-income or minority areas. Thus, the negative impacts of this project will be felt most strongly by communities that may already be struggling.

And individual citizens won't be the only ones affected—the presence of F-35's, with their noise and disruption, will also result in losses in service and shopping facilities. The anticipated costs of both housing and commercial losses, with the accompanying loss of tax revenue, will have a destructive effect on not only the area closest to Truax, but on the entire City of Madison and surrounding areas.

Although proponents of the project have talked about mitigation efforts, there is no reason to believe that increased soundproofing will be effective anywhere near the flight path, where the neighborhood is predominately made up of frame-built, double-glazed-windowed houses and apartments. Further, we have learned that in Burlington, VT, where a similar project is housed, mitigation efforts are planned to take place over many years with no immediate government assistance.

Damages and Risks to Health and Safety

Our community is concerned about damage to air quality due to the excessive fuel lost and burned during take offs and flights of the F-35s, as well as about the increased use of polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), the "forever chemicals" that are used to de-ice and fight oil fires at the airfield. Recent research

has found that PFAS already exist in abundant quantities in Starkweather Creek, which adjoins the air field and empties into Lake Monona. (Tests for PFAS in Lake Monona have been ordered but have not yet been conducted.) Alternative chemicals that the military is using have not been thoroughly tested and are very similar to the harmful PFAS.

We are also concerned about damage to hearing and cognitive function of individuals who experience the noise associated with F-35s. People who have experienced F-35s in other communities have complained of nausea, persistent ringing in the ears, disorientation, loss of balance, and trauma. There are several elementary schools and many day care centers located on or near the proposed flight paths, and the Draft United States Air Force F-35A Operational Beddown National Guard Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) concludes that the affected areas have “higher proportions of children.” Sustained loud noises are harmful to children and disruptive to education.

Additional health and safety concerns are posed by the risk of accidents due to mechanical failures, which have already been seen in the F-35s, and the risk associated with potential nuclear munitions that the F-35s could carry in the future.

Finally, it should be noted that Madison has been making efforts to reduce carbon emissions, and we are concerned that the rapid increase of carbon emissions associated with the F-35s will counteract those efforts and negate the benefits we are working so hard to achieve.

No Offsetting Benefits

The EIS states that increases to employment and income in the Madison region would be “beneficial but negligible.” Indeed, the military estimates that the project will create only 64 new jobs. It is antithetical to conclude that the addition of 64 jobs could be worth displacing thousands of residents, disrupting thousands more, polluting our natural environment, and gutting our local tax base.

Conclusion

Senator Baldwin, as you are a former resident of the Marquette Neighborhood, I'm sure you can easily identify with our concerns. There are over 4500 households in the Marquette neighborhood that are within a short distance of the current flight paths for the F-16 jets of the Air National Guard and the Dane County airport. We are concerned about the wellbeing of our neighborhood, of the neighborhoods located more proximate to Truax Field, and the City of Madison as a whole.

We hope you will reconsider your support for this harmful project and we invite you to hold a listening session here in our neighborhood to find out what your constituents think of this project and to share your thoughts with us.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Krasno
MNA President