

Assembly District 76 Candidate Responses to Safe Skies Questions

(Currently held by Chris Taylor)

1 - Earlier this year, the Air Force selected Truax Field in Madison to receive a squadron of F-35 fighter jets by 2023. How were you involved in the local response to the proposal to bring these jets to Madison?

Marsha Rummel - I have been actively involved since I learned about the EIS process to review Truax as a possible site for F-35s. On February 28 2018, I invited east and north side alders and county board supervisors to join me in hosting a listening session to gather questions and concerns from community members to present to the March 8 National Guard Bureau public meeting. Over 70 people attended the listening session. As Council President, I worked with Council members to prepare a summary of what we have learned with recommendations.

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/council/district/districtfiles/district6/documents/F35%20Comments.pdf>

After the draft EIS for siting F-35s at Truax was published in August 2019, I worked with affected alders, county supervisors and state representatives to invite community feedback and encourage submission of comments to the National Guard Bureau. We convened three community meetings attended by over 1,000 residents to provide info and encourage participation in the EIS public comment period. Over 6,000 comments were received by the Air National Guard. In addition to the disparate environmental impacts to low income and communities of color living nearby, PFAS contamination at Truax and the impact on Well 15 was one of the major concerns raised in public comment. None of the other candidates in the race were active on this issue which galvanized a large section of the north and east side of Madison. I was a co-sponsor of the Council resolution that requested the Air National Guard to reconsider Truax Field as a preferred location "until and unless the findings of the EIS are shown to misrepresent and underestimate the significant environmental impacts to those living, working, and visiting the north and east sides of Madison". The resolution was watered down but it passed. I regularly reported about meetings and opportunities to submit comments to the EIS process in my alder blog. I shared comments I sent to NGB in my alder blog of September 30, 2019 Updates - District 6 - Common Council When the final decision was issued April 15, 2020 the affected alders, including me, submitted a press release with the following statement: "On March 17, 2020 the Common Council passed a [second] resolution opposing the selection of Truax Field as a site for F-35 bomber jets. The Air Force's own analysis in the Final EIS released in February confirms the significant environmental impacts identified in the Draft EIS, including substantially reduced quality and quantity of current affordable housing stock, decreased value of the property tax base, reduced opportunities for Transit-Oriented Development, ongoing soil, ground and surface water PFAS contamination violations by the ANG, significant adverse health effects that disproportionately affect children, residents who are low income and people of color. "These impacts are contrary to the City of Madison's values of equity, sustainability,

health and adaptability as codified in our Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2018, the City's Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative, and undermine multiple long-term goals of City policy makers." "Residents of our Districts have overwhelmingly opposed this action in writing by submitting thousands of comments to the Air Force and Common Council, and in person at listening sessions, community meetings and Common Council sessions. They have expressed serious concerns about their health, quality of life in the neighborhoods, quality of education for children in nearby schools, the quality of their drinking water, and their major investments in their homes. "The Air Force's analysis showed that of the five sites in contention, Madison would be the most severely impacted by the beddown of these bomber jets. We are saddened by this decision, but will continue stand with our neighbors in opposition to this action. Members of our community have already retained legal representation and will likely be pursuing legal action." I continue to oppose siting F-35s at Truax and if elected I will continue to work on this issue with community residents and organizations.

Heather Driscoll - in August 2019 (as a Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Yahara "SASY" Neighborhood Board member) I coordinated with Safe Skies Clean Water WI Coalition to urge the Board to take a strong stance against the F-35s. As a result, the SASY Board submitted a letter opposing the F-35s to elected leaders and I requested that it be submitted in the EIS public comments as well -when a reporter contacted me about doing a story in the fall I gave him info for diverse contacts to reach out to elevate their voices -I advocated and requested the SASY Board to co-sponsor a forum at East High which I attended and helped promote -I picked up No F-35 signs from Bob Queen and distributed them at our October SASY public event at Garver Feed Mill -last year I spent 6 months every week at the Capitol in Rep. Taylor's office working on gun safety issues and I also helped with some constituent services around no F-35s. I assisted with set-up and helped staff the No F-35s event at Goodman Community Center in October. -I actively participated in the parade at Truax this spring and the car/bike parade at the Capitol in April -I've also lodged F-16 noise complaints to expose the noise impacts from military jets

Nicki Vander Meulen - On the Madison Metropolitan School Board, I was the only member to vote for a resolution to oppose the F-35s coming to Madison. I also advocated against the F-35's in the education community in particular because of the impact they would have on 3 of our schools.

Francesca Hong - I signed the petition opposing the F-35s.

Tyrone Cratic Williams - When the jets were proposed, I continued to work on the frontlines addressing the current and immediate needs of my community. I've been working to dismantle the issues that are causations to people's suffering including poverty, affordable and accessible health care, lack of quality food options and the over-policing of poor people. Growing up on the North side of Madison and attending Madison East High School, as a Black male, growing up in Dane County, one of the statistically worse communities to raise a Black child, I have firsthand knowledge of the long standing systemic issues surrounding the environmental, social

and criminal justice issues in our underserved communities. I have dedicated my life to serving the very community that invested in me as a child. I work to ensure those who have similar backgrounds as me have the tools to reach success and gain opportunities far beyond what I had at their stage in life. I've led financial and employment education training to students in all of the Madison public high schools while providing them with employment opportunities and mentorship. The students I served faced significant barriers in life such as living in low income neighborhoods, involved in the criminal justice system, foster care and other various traumas. I've created partnerships with social services, teachers, parents/guardians, employers to develop networks to meet each student's specific needs to ensure their success. I currently own a financial literacy education company and teach valuable financial and wealth building life skills to underserved communities, including many community members on the North side of Madison. I am currently a Black police officer, serving the city that I grew up in, in the county with some of the highest incarceration rates in the country for people who look like me. For years I've led training on implicit racial bias and its impact on marginalized communities, pushing for policy reforms to reduce racial disparities. I have served many community members living in the North side, assisting with various mental health, social service and housing issues. While most officers may not be the best resources for those issues, my background enables me to connect beyond the uniform to address the underlying issues at hand.

Dewey Bredeson - Thank you for your questions. While as I do sympathise with your cause, I cannot say that I would make stopping the F-35s a top priority. It seems to me that this decision has already been made and that it is a Federal issue and not up to the State of Wisconsin. While I agree with many of your points it seems to me it might be time to negotiate and mitigate as much damage as possible. For instance I would suggest that the F-35s only take off to the north to fly over fewer residences. If I am elected I would be happy to meet with your Safe Skies Clean Water Wisconsin group to discuss what I could do.

Ali Maresh - I've always been publicly opposed to placing the F-35 fighter jets at Truax Field. Since announcing my run for office. I've tried to use this platform to advocate against the fighter jets.

Patrick Hull – No response.

2 - This fall, the Air National Guard will begin construction at Truax Field to accommodate their new F-35 fighter jets. Do you support the state and Wisconsin DNR stopping all construction at Truax Field until there is a complete investigation and approved cleanup plan for the PFAS contamination in groundwater, Starkweather Creek and Lake Monona caused by airport and Truax Field operations? If you support stopping construction, how would you achieve this goal?

Marsha Rummel - Yes. The Department of Defense and the Air National Guard cannot safely and legally perform the planned construction activities without a complete site investigation that defines the extent and nature of PFAs contamination in soil and groundwater. I would push

for the WDNR to require the ANG to follow Wisconsin law which includes a complete investigation and a plan describing how excavated soil and dewatering will be managed. Other areas of concern include two former burn pits on the base. While the Air National Guard has taken responsibility for conducting the site investigation, as far as I know, no additional work has taken place yet. This should occur as soon as possible. I work with the Governor's office and WDNR staff to make sure we are following our laws. I would also reach out to the community and ask them to weigh in so policymakers hear from residents.

Heather Driscoll - Yes I support this and I will request a meeting with Governor Evers and Adjutant General Knapp to ask them to show their commitment to cleanup efforts by delaying all F-35 related construction until the Air National Guard has completed a full investigation of its PFAS contamination and provided an approved cleanup plan. I will use my position to encourage constituents to submit comments to the DNR asking them to withhold any stormwater or wastewater approvals for construction at Truax Field until a thorough site investigation and proper treatment and disposal plan for contaminated soil and water has been completed. As a legislator I will fight hard for stronger laws to protect our drinking water and waterways.

Nicki Vander Meulen - I completely support trying to stop the construction and fighting to get an approved clean up plan for PFAS. I will push in the Assembly for stricter PFAS regulation. Also as the only attorney in this race, I know that when all else fails sometimes you have to take things to court. We must use all avenues available to us to try and stop this. Those include increased public pressure, regulatory action, statutory action, and the courts.

Francesca Hong - Yes. I support stopping construction until there is a complete investigation and cleanup plan. There is a large amount of contamination occurring from PFAS in Madison. Clean water is important not only for the environment, but for the community as well. Until we can clean up the already existing contamination in the ground, there is more risk than benefit in starting construction at Truax. We need to stop construction by creating an office for environmental justice which monitors environmental cleanup and protection. I will also work to pass legislation requiring environmental standards to be met before construction.

Tyrone Cratic Williams - Many Madison residents of the Isthmus are concerned about the F35 military jets operating out of Truax Field on Madison's North side. These concerns are valid. Studies have shown that Truax and the surrounding watersheds are currently highly contaminated with PFAS chemical compounds, and this has shown negative long term impacts on the health of people living around those waterways. The F35's are also estimated to cost Dane County taxpayers over \$200 million dollars per year and potentially lower property values. Halting construction and completing a study for known issues will not stop families from being exposed to life threatening and altering contaminants as we speak. I support stopping the construction and cleaning the contaminants. We must also create measures to improve the quality of life for those currently impacted by Dane County's long history of abusing its

watersheds. These issues are intersectional and a holistic and equitable approach is required to create effective change if we are to truly address the underlying issues at hand.

Dewey Bredeson – See response to Question 1.

Ali Marish - We know that the economic gains do not outweigh the environmental costs of this project. I am in full support of a complete investigation and cleanup plan for the PFAS contamination. DNR has stated that the Air Force's environmental impact statement did not thoroughly address the risk of water contamination. Madison and our entire state still has a great deal of work to do to address water contamination. We must ensure that we do not start a new project that contributes to worsening this public health issue.

Patrick Hull – No response.

3 - The current mission of the Wisconsin Air National Guard at Truax Field is training fighter jet pilots. There are 43 other missions available to Truax Field including engineering, scientific and medical missions which are more compatible with the surrounding populated urban area. Will you push for the Wisconsin National Guard and Governor Evers to obtain a new mission for Truax Field? If you support a new mission, how would you achieve this goal?

Marsha Rummel - Yes. Given the proposed construction of an expanded medical facility on the base, I would advocate to change the mission to frontline medical and emergency disaster relief. I would work with the 115th command staff, WI Veteran's Affairs Secy, our federal legislative delegation and USAF to plan for this as an alternative mission. I would also engage the community in requesting a change of the mission of the 115th FW.

Heather Driscoll – Yes. I fully agree that it would be best for the Wisconsin National Guard to obtain a new mission that's appropriate and compatible for our urban area and I would support efforts to push for it. It's essential that they find a new mission that doesn't put environmental and economic burdens on the communities of color living near the base. I would request a meeting with Governor Evers and Adjutant General Knapp to urge them to work on finding a new mission for the 115th Fighter Wing.

Nicki Vander Meulen - I would absolutely support a new mission for Truax Field. First off the stationing of jets with nuclear weapon first strike capacity in Madison is completely unacceptable. Second Madison is not the same city as when Traux was built. Our urban center is much closer and we have many more people living near Truax than similar facilities. The mission must change to reflect the change we've seen in Madison around Truax. I think the most effective way to go about this is putting more pressure on our federal elected officials.

Francesca Hong - Yes; I will push for a new mission for Truax. Truax is surrounded by Madison community members and schools. The fighter jets taking off are extremely loud and disruptive to these settings. Truax is also in a neighborhood where the effects would disproportionately

affect communities of color. We can get Truax a new mission by gathering as a community and as elected officials to oppose Truax the fighter jets at Truax. We can also support passing legislation that imposes a noise maximum in areas where there are residential neighborhoods.

Tyrone Cratic Williams - I will only support missions that work to improve the overall quality of life for the people of my community. To do this, we must continue to work in partnership with those who are most impacted through transparency, empowerment and inclusion. We have to include these communities and provide them with real decision-making powers in order to create effective policies and sustainable frameworks to meet their specific needs. For any mission that is supported by the community, I will push for legislation and recruit stakeholders to ensure that affected communities gain assets from those endeavors in terms of wealth building, health equity and homeownership. I will not sit back while low income and Black and Brown communities are used as talking points for reform but continue to walk away with little to nothing of substance afterwards. Our racist history and system of redlining placed the majority of these communities in undesirable geographic areas in the first place. We have to acknowledge and own that and then work to reverse and prevent these outcomes moving forward.

Dewey Bredeson – See response to Question 1.

Ali Maresh - I believe we can achieve this goal by raising the voices of residents who would greatly benefit from an alternative mission being placed at Truax Field. This means reaching out directly to community leaders who are living in the neighborhoods that are affected by the fighter jets and creating a dialogue directly with community leaders, the Wisconsin National Guard, and Governor Evers. As we navigate the current economic and public health crisis, this is the time to reevaluate our priorities and ensure that the mission at Truax Field truly serves our community.

Patrick Hull - No response.

4 - The selection of Truax Field for the new F-35 fighter jets would not be possible without the support of Senator Tammy Baldwin. Will you demand that she reverse her support for stationing the new F-35 jets at Truax Field?

Marsha Rummel - Yes. I would ask for a one on one meeting and I would invite her to a listening session with residents so she hears directly from constituents. Most of my contacts with residents in the 76AD through the two year process have expressed strong opposition to F-35s. Senator Baldwin may continue to support F-35s but I want her to see the constituents she is not representing who have historically made up the base of her support in Madison.

Heather Driscoll - Yes I have already called her and requested her to reverse her support for stationing the F-35s at Truax. I will continue to maintain that position and will apply pressure when and where possible.

Nicki Vander Meuelen - I have a lot of respect for Senator Baldwin, and I have worked with her many times. I also know you sometimes have to tell your friends they are wrong. Senator Baldwin was wrong when she gave her support for the fighter jets, and I would use any opportunity to encourage her to change her position.

Francesca Hong - Yes. Truax impacts many people in the Madison community and as elected officials, we need to work even harder to bring equity and care into practice and support communities who have been historically discriminated against.

Tyrone Cratic Williams - I will demand that all Wisconsin Representatives take an equitable, intersectional mindset when it comes to not only the F-35 jets but policy in general.

Dewey Bredeson – See response to Question 1.

Ali Maresh - I would certainly ask Senator Baldwin to reverse her position on the placement of the F-35 fighter jets at Truax Field.

Patrick Hull – No response.

5 - Truax Field was selected for the new F-35 fighter jets despite the greatest impacts falling on low-income and families of color living adjacent to the base. Will you promote the creation of an environmental justice office at the Wisconsin DNR to help protect residents from environmental injustice and environmental racism?

Marsha Rummel - That's an excellent idea. I would be interested in partnering with SSCW- WI to promote this idea.

Heather Driscoll - Yes Wisconsin and Indiana are the only states in the Great Lakes Region that do not have programs and policies in place to actively promote and enforce the concepts of environmental justice. Across the country and right here in Wisconsin, communities of color and low-income residents in both urban and rural areas have been disproportionately subjected to higher levels of environmental risks due to land use and housing policies, construction of highways, and siting of farms, factories, and utilities. To address these issues, several other states have established environmental justice offices with full-time staff dedicated to incorporating environmental justice principles and practices into state policies and agency operations. I will support legislation to establish an Environmental Justice Office at the DNR to promote environmental justice and equity. I spoke about my commitment to this legislation at my Environmental Town Hall event last month. The Office will: a. Conduct Agency training and development developing and maintaining a workforce that is trained in environmental justice, values diversity, and delivers services in a culturally competent, sensitive, and equitable manner. b. Coordinate with federal, state, local, and tribal governments working with all levels of government to improve joint effectiveness in reducing disparities in exposures and health effects. c. Measure and report on progress committing to

achieving results, measuring progress, and regularly communicating with stakeholders about results. Checking in with the community and seeking feedback on implementation of this framework is essential during periodic meetings with the environmental justice advocates, organizations and governmental entities.

Nicki Vander Meulen – Yes, I would. The impact study we got on the F-35 jets was completely inadequate. Having an environmental justice office at the DNR, we can task such an office to creating their own environmental analysis in these sorts of situations. We could have also used regulatory pressure from such an agency to help stop the F-35s.

Francesca Hong - Yes. We need more environmental justice. Environmental justice is intertwined with racial justice and we have spent hundreds of years discriminating against our communities of color. We need to protect more residents from environmental injustice and environmental racism.

Tyrone Cratic Williams - Yes. Dane County has some of the most disproportionate disparities among people of color in the country. These are issues that need to be addressed, in addition to environmental concerns related to the F35 jets, but not at the expense of the immediate daily challenges the hardworking families of these neighborhoods are facing today. Through my professional and personal experience in financial literacy, workforce development and community building, I will push legislation to include but limited to: 1. Increased transparency to keep residents consistently informed of the environmental quality of their neighborhoods. Current and future residents and property owners should be aware of the conditions of their environment in order to make informed decisions on their living arrangements. Access to this information should be proactively provided before any lease signings, appraisals or other transfers of ownership. 2. Provide low-income renters living in contaminated zones the option for the right of first refusal as future affordable housing options arise or are developed. Again, residents should have the ability to make informed decisions on their health and well being if they are living in a contaminated zone. 3. Invest in matched savings individual developmental account (IDA) programs for affected residents with financial education courses focusing on home ownership. For years I've partnered with Summit Credit Union and established youth IDA's to purchase assets of their choice for higher education, employment certifications, driver's education, etc. 4. Establish policies requiring the installation of residential drinking water filters, carbon monoxide detectors and yearly radon testing in contaminated zones. Cost of said requirements will be a tax deduction for impacted homeowners and landlords.

Dewey Bredeson – See response to Question 1.

Ali Marish - Yes, I will fully support the creation of an environmental justice office at the Wisconsin DNR. environmental justice is critical to addressing systemic racism in Wisconsin. In addition to creating this office, I would also like to see immediate action taken to prioritize environmental justice in our city and state. That's why I'd fight for more resources to be devoted to ensuring clean water for people to drink and fish from; combat childhood lead

poisoning; mitigate air and noise pollution, and continue to fight against the placement of the F-35s in Madison.

Patrick Hull – No response.