

# Safe Skies Clean Water Wisconsin – TALKING POINTS

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Jump to a topic:

COVID-19 requires re-examining our priorities.....	1
Tradeoffs.....	2
Environmental Racism .....	3
The PFAS Connection .....	4
Climate Change and Pollution.....	4
Safety issues .....	5
F-35 is a continuously repaired flawed product.....	5
Boondoggle and Profits.....	5
Local economic impact.....	6
Purpose of Fighter Jets.....	6
Alternative Mission for ANG.....	7
Air Force decision and timeline .....	7

## [COVID-19 requires re-examining our priorities](#)

### Nationally

Our country was ill prepared for the coronavirus epidemic. The enormous funds spent on the F-35 fighter jet program could have been used to prepare for the epidemic and save lives, rather than wage war with a first strike, nuclear-equipped offensive weapon like the F-35. It costs \$44,000 to fly an F-35 jet for one hour; money better spent on essential medical staff. The \$100 million cost of a single fighter jet would provide much-needed medical resources that could have prevented and minimized the spread of the pandemic. The \$1.5 billion dollar cost for the proposed squadron at Truax Field would pay for 60,000 ventilators, sorely needed to prevent deaths from the coronavirus. F-35 jets cannot fight pandemics.

### Locally

2021 is Madison’s worst budget gap projection in 20 years - the Mayor is asking for 5% cuts in all city spending.

“Times like these call us to double down on our priorities” -*Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway*

**\*ACTION: Encourage Congress to redirect excess Pentagon dollars for human needs:**

<https://www.safeskiescleanwaterwi.org/congress-voting-on-defense-budget-sign-now/>

Urge your friends to contact their representatives (and your rep if it’s not Mark Pocan) - to immediately and strongly support the House Resolution (H.Res.1003) introduced by Congresswoman Barbara Lee, and joined by Congressman Mark Pocan, called "Expressing the sense

of the House of Representatives regarding wasteful Pentagon spending and supporting cuts to the bloated defense budget," which would support moving \$350 billion out of militarism and into human needs.

In the midst of COVID, 4 days after the President declared a State of Emergency, the U.S. Congress had the audacity to request more taxpayer dollars to purchase (98) F-35 fighter bombers- (19) MORE fighter planes than the Pentagon's actual request. The projected cost per plane is estimated up to \$100,000,000. Note this is nothing new, **Congress and administration after administration continue to increase the military budget in preparation for war while neglecting public health, education, and other domestic priorities.**

In Fiscal Year 2020, the Pentagon received \$738 billion while Health and Human Services received \$94 billion. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which is front and center in the fight against COVID, received under \$8 billion. For the price of one F-35 fighter jet, 77.9 million N-95 face masks could be purchased at a cost of \$1 per mask. The 19 superfluous F-35's requested by Congress could purchase some 30,000 premium ventilators at a cost of \$50,000 each. When our government misallocates our money into war instead of providing for public needs to keep us healthy, we all suffer.

The scope of a pandemic shows that the biggest threats to our security can come through inattention to public health. Pandemics, climate change, inadequate infrastructure and education, and lack of affordable housing are some of the biggest threats to collective well-being we face. We urgently need investment in health care, the environment, education, and other sectors that help us thrive. In order to do this, our leaders need to start investing money where it matters—not in weapons of war, but in programs that build truly resilient communities.

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## Tradeoffs

We have thousands of fighter jets whose purpose is to kill and destroy. Wisconsin taxpayers paid \$201 million in 2018 alone for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program. Those same tax dollars **could have paid for life-enhancing equipment and services** such as:

- 8,000 hospital ventilators
- 5,000,000 N95 respirators
- 2500 ER nurses for one year
- 1,000,000 months of FoodShare benefits
- 136,916 Children Receiving Low-Income Healthcare for 1 Year

<https://www.nationalpriorities.org/interactive-data/trade-offs/?state=55&program=28>

## Environmental Racism

<https://mejo.us/pfas-covid-and-potential-environmental-racism/> “Environmental racism refers to the institutional rules, regulations, policies or government and/or corporate decisions that deliberately target certain communities for locally undesirable land uses and lax enforcement of zoning and environmental laws, resulting in communities being disproportionately exposed to toxic and hazardous waste based upon race.” - Greenaction <http://greenaction.org/what-is-environmental-justice/>

Environmental impacts, individual racism and systemic racism combine and the effects can end up being greater than just the effects of the separate consequences. The effects on those without power are easy for decision-makers in government to ignore. It is important to speak up when decision-makers refuse to address this.

For over 80 years the military has been dumping and burning toxic chemicals at Truax Field. **PFAS forever chemicals cause a number of health issues from cancer to immune system deficiency to endocrine disruption (a process where the chemicals mimic hormones and interfere with development).** The amounts of chemicals put in the water near the base are significant when the foam can fill an entire aircraft hangar each time there is a test to be done or a fire or a false alarm. The people most directly affected-those who live around the base- were not aware of the toxins for years. Even when the government has admitted this, the people making their homes in these neighborhoods are provided no alternative resources than to drink the available water, nurse their children, and bathe in these toxins. There are people in our community who continue to rely on the polluted fish they catch in area lakes and creeks as a food source.

The extreme noise pollution from these aircraft causes hearing damage. “The Air Force concluded in its draft Environmental Impact Statement that locating the F-35s at the Truax Air National Guard Base would have a disparate negative impact on children, people of color and low-income individuals who live in dense populations in and around the Dane County Regional Airport... Health impacts of noise pollution include overproduction of stress hormones, interruption of sleep, ringing in the ear, negative effects on mental health, increased blood pressure and impacts on cardiovascular disease... which can lead to delayed speech development, reduced attention, impaired concentration, long-term memory issues and decreased math and reading comprehension.” - Dr. Elizabeth Neary

**Black people are significantly more likely to contract COVID and die from it.**

**Wisconsin has the highest levels of incarceration for Black people in the nation.**

**Wisconsin has the widest racial achievement gap in our schools.**

**The median income for a Black household in Dane County is 45% that of their white counterpart.**

**There are more than 6,000 low-income seniors who are cost burdened or severely cost burdened in Dane County.**

We should not be compounding already UNACCEPTABLE stress and trauma levels by deliberately targeting low-income communities with the introduction of these fighter bombers into their daily lives.

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## The PFAS Connection

The military and water pollution go together like bread and butter or ham and eggs. But the combination doesn't taste as good; instead it makes us sick and can kill.

About 650 U.S. military bases are contaminated with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly called PFAS. These man-made chemical compounds – about 6,000 in all – are highly persistent in the environment and the human body. That means they don't break down and can accumulate over time. Exposure to these compounds has been linked to cancer, thyroid disease, high cholesterol, ulcerative colitis, pregnancy-induced hypertension and other health risks.

Chemical companies like 3M and DuPont started manufacturing PFAS chemicals back in the 1940s. Military bases across the country, including Truax, started using PFAS in fire-fighting foam in the 1970s or earlier. Bases like Truax used the foam to put out fires and train fire fighters. Fires were purposefully set in burn pits and then sprayed with the toxic foam. From there it seeped into groundwater, surface water and eventually drinking water.

Truax had two burn pits. One was constructed in the 1950s by the Department of Defense on Dane County Airport property right next to Starkweather Creek. In 1990, the DNR asked the Air National Guard who was responsible for investigating and cleaning it up. Over 30 years later, no action has been taken.

Some limited testing done a few years ago found PFAS levels up to 46,000 parts per trillion (ppt) in airbase soils and groundwater. (Wisconsin recently proposed a 20 ppt groundwater standard). Late last year, the DNR found that water in Starkweather Creek had 400 ppt of the PFOS compound and foam collected near the Olbrich Park boat launch had between 80,000 and 90,000 ppt. This January, fish tested in Lake Monona had PFAS concentrations of 110,000 ppt and fish in Starkweather Creek had up to 180,000 ppt.

So far the Air Force has refused to clean up the water and soil contamination it has been causing for over half a century. Now they want to base a squadron of \$100 million fighter jets at Truax, causing more air, noise and water pollution.

We are concerned that the Air Force and Air National Guard may soon try to begin a multi-million dollar construction project at Truax to prepare for the F-35 jets, which will likely stir up more contamination. The DNR has said they need to do a full site investigation and remediate the contaminated soil and water. **Please tell Governor Evers and the DNR that they need to stand strong and require the military to clean up their mess.**

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## Climate Change and Pollution

Jet fuel is used for propulsion of the aircraft with the aircraft holding up to 2,761 gallons, stealth mode, or plus 2 extra 600 gallon drop tanks for a full fuel load of 3,361 gallons of fuel for every flight. **The F-35 uses 60% more fuel** than the current F-16s, and the emissions spewed by the jet's exhaust are fine particulates that are bad for children to breathe and everyone else. The F-35A can burn 4000 lbs./597 gallons of JP-8 jet fuel per hour.

The Air Force conducted no evaluation of air pollutant exposure to neighborhoods adjacent to Truax Field.

The fossil fuels used by the F-35s are diametrically at odds with the professed desire of local leaders to address climate change and create a sustainable community. U.S. Department of Defense is the single largest producer of greenhouse gases in the world, with the largest portion of Pentagon fuel consumption being for military jets. See [Pentagon Fuel Use, Climate Change, and the Costs of War](#)

## Safety issues

Truax Field is located in an urban area where fighter jet crashes can injure, sicken and kill Madison residents. A marker at Hudson Beach on Lake Monona shows a prior crash site, less than 100 feet from neighborhood homes. Malfunctions have caused jet fuel tanks to be dropped into Lake Mendota. The F-35 is made of 42 percent composite material, more than prior jets. The Air Force EIS states that when these materials are burned, they produce toxic fumes and airborne respirable fibers. A fire requires twice the fire suppressant foam than current jets.

June 8, 2020 - Utah: <https://www.safeskiescleanwaterwi.org/an-f-35-stealth-fighters-landing-gear-collapsed-after-landing-at-a-utah-base/>

May 20, 2020 - Eglin AF base in FL, including one F-35: <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2020/05/20/after-two-crashes-within-days-eglin-announces-safety-pause/>

June 25, 2020 – Madison F-16: <https://www.safeskiescleanwaterwi.org/national-guard-says-f-16s-circled-madison-airport-after-warning-light-malfunction-jet-landed-safely/>

## F-35 is a continuously repaired flawed product

A string of continued problems have plagued the F-35 including necessary engineered repairs that prevent injury to a pilot during ejection from obtaining a broken neck. Test were on “dummies.”(The ejection seat was fixed to accommodate a man or woman pilot with a weight less than 136 pounds, down to 103 pounds) (source-Military Services Fifth-Generation Tactical Aircraft Challenges and F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program Update Hearing - Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives, Feb.16, 2017, page 33-34). Yes, young pilots are to fly the F-35.

March 11, 2010 – Design flaws: <https://www.safeskiescleanwaterwi.org/f-35-design-flaws-mounting-new-document-shows/>

## Boondoggle and Profits

The latest in a long string of reports on the flaws of the F-35s found that the “modernisation” of the F-35 is two years behind schedule and its cost has risen by \$1.5 billion to a total of \$12 billion. The modernisation of the relatively new stealth fighter’s software and hardware - was initially to be delivered by 2024, but now will not be handed over until 2026, according to a report released by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on 12 May, 2020.

“[T]he U.S. government contributes almost 70% of the company’s total revenues. Moreover, nearly 28% of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD’s) total military procurement is supplied by Lockheed Martin,” according to Forbes.

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## Local economic impact

### **False promise of ‘local jobs’**

Lockheed Martin has claimed the development of this weapons system (at an exorbitant cost of \$400 billion) is beneficial because it provides 125,000 jobs. That’s \$3.2 Million for each job. To add insult to injury, the Center for International Policy found that the figure is more likely between 50,000 and 60,000 jobs in total.

There will NOT be local jobs created from the forcing of F-35 bombers into our community. The AirForce’s EIS claimed that they bring ‘up to 64 jobs’. HALF of these jobs will go to the S. Carolina fighter squadron at Truax and are not under the jurisdiction of the WI National Guard. The other HALF of these jobs, per the contract between Lockheed Martin and the U.S. military, are slated for Lockheed Martin’s contractors for the flight simulators and work on the bomber planes. This means there are ZERO jobs created for our WI National Guard. In fact, it may result in the WI National Guard LOSING maintenance jobs.

Our neighborhoods would be better served with increased funding for hard-working, local, community-based organizations in Madison designed to ADD VALUE. The Northside Planning Council, via different programs during the last 5 years, has created MORE THAN 150 JOBS. That’s more than double the jobs the AirForce claims the F35s may bring.

### **Impact on local property values**

A minimum of \$255 Million in residential property value will be negatively affected.

<https://www.safeskiescleanwaterwi.org/madison-real-estate-firm-tallies-f35-affected-property-values/>

## Purpose of Fighter Jets

The purpose of fighter jets is to kill people. There is no declaration of war and no due process, but we use them anyway. Hosting such an offensive weapon seems ludicrous when our current security threats now come from cyber-attacks and terrorism, neither of which the F-35 can counter.

History of US Military Interventions 1890 to the present

<https://sites.evergreen.edu/zoltan/interventions/>

## Alternative Mission for ANG

If we want the 115th Fighter Wing to be an asset to our community, we should find a new mission that is appropriate and compatible for our urban area. We could trade in bombers for a medical and/or disaster relief mission, which might well provide more jobs than the current fighter aircraft mission and match more closely with Madison's progressive values.

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## Air Force decision and timeline

### **The Air Force ignored our input and their own analysis.**

By selecting Truax Field to receive a squadron of F-35 fighter jets, the Air Force ignored the comments and concerns of Madison residents. Over 6,400 comments were submitted on the EIS for all five sites, but nearly 90% of these addressed the selection of Truax Field. The Air Force selected the site with the worst environmental impacts and with the greatest impacts to low-income and minority families as well as children. It ignored the location of Truax Field in a dense urban city like Madison.

<https://www.safeskiescleanwaterwi.org/air-force-picks-truax-for-f-35-base-madison-opponents-consider-legal-response/>

### **Truax Construction Timeline**

June 9, 2020: With the Record of Decision complete, the 115th Fighter Wing is able to start the process of competing and awarding the construction projects to general contractors.

<https://www.safeskiescleanwaterwi.org/truax-construction-timeline/>