

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 25, 2016

The Honorable Deborah Lee James
Secretary, United States Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

General David L. Goldfein
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

Dear Secretary James and General Goldfein,

We write to express our strong support of Holloman Air Force Base as a candidate for relocating operational F-16 squadrons to stand up new F-16 Formal Training Units (FTU's). The F-16 pipeline would greatly benefit from relocation to Holloman. Based on the interim FTU site survey, we believe that Holloman meets or exceeds the assessment areas determined by the Air Force. First and foremost, Holloman is already excelling as an F-16 training base and is well positioned to expand this mission. Holloman is located in one of the most pristine areas for training and testing in the nation, with access to clear airspace and a varied geography that can truly test our nation's pilots' ability to carry out their important jobs. Secondly, Holloman has the capacity to increase the F-16 mission and would only require a relatively modest investment in facilities to fully support additional units. The airmen and the nation would greatly benefit by taking advantage of unmatched airspace, existing infrastructure and community support.

- **Access to unmatched, restricted airspace** – Holloman and White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) are working together to optimize access to WSMR's airspace. Last year WSMR Commanding General Timothy Coffin and Holloman's 49th Wing Commander Colonel Robert Kiebler created the Joint Test and Training Operations Center (JTTOC). The JTTOC was established to directly de-conflict schedules between WSMR's test missions and the flying schedules of Holloman's F-16, RPA, and German Air Force missions, in addition to local stakeholders. This joint effort has not only improved scheduling, but optimized real-time capability and airspace availability, and demonstrated that the region has the capacity to support additional aircraft. Further, the departure of the German Air Force by 2018, with flying operations ceasing by the end of 2017, will further increase flexibility and access to available airspace. The regional military installations and the New Mexico Military Base Planning Commission are also engaging with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to modernize and expand non-restricted airspace surrounding WSMR for use by Air Force units, including Holloman, in the region. WSMR's long-term dedication to supporting Holloman's missions can be seen in its 30-year strategic plan completed this month. We believe that the recent work of both commanders in proactively improving airspace availability and scheduling efficiency is

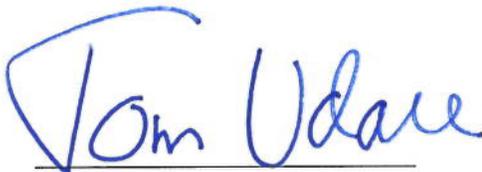
indicative of the importance placed on better utilizing and prioritizing Department of Defense (DoD) airspace.

- **Existing infrastructure** – We understand that the formal assessment will be completed at Holloman this fall. We expect this assessment will find that, compared to the other bases, little to no military construction would need to take place in order to house additional F-16s. Further, we believe Holloman will score well on FTU criteria for capacity, as the base has benefitted from significant investments to support its current F-16 mission. Holloman also has the vacant 4th Space Control Squadron which would be well-suited for operations. Finally, the new 49th Medical Group clinic, currently under construction, is expected to be completed by April 2017. It will be a state-of-the-art clinic serving the active duty and retired Air Force community in the region.
- **Exceptional flying environment and strong community support** – Holloman is graced with over 360 days of sunshine each year, temperate weather, and excellent air quality caused by low population density with limited encroachment risk from surrounding federal land. In the region, Holloman enjoys strong community support, as reflected in the City of Alamogordo's active participation, and that of local governments in five other surrounding counties, in the Office of Economic Adjustment's Southern New Mexico-El Paso Joint Land Use Study. As a result, there is a high level of understanding and appreciation for the mission of Holloman in the region. Alamogordo is truly an "Air Force town" and the departing airmen frequently share with us that they have never felt the level of support for their mission as they have in Alamogordo. Additionally, as the German Air Force service members begin drawing down in 2017, there will be an increase in quality rental housing options available in the area. Combined with the low cost of living in Alamogordo and boundless recreational opportunities in southern New Mexico, this is a great location for airmen and their families to live.

We are extremely proud of the strong military installations in the region and their ability to support diverse and critical missions. We acknowledge and support WSMR's commitment to continuously improving the airspace management for their irreplaceable asset of over 3,400 square miles of restricted airspace (which balloons to 7,619 square miles with call-up areas included). We respectfully request an opportunity to meet with you and your staff to discuss the incredible asset that is Holloman. If you have any questions please contact Matt Padilla (Senator Udall), Tony Samp (Senator Heinrich), and Jacci Guy (Representative Pearce).

Thank you for your continued support of the airmen of Holloman.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Steve Pearce
United States Representative