

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 14, 2012

Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

General Mark A. Welsh III
Chief of Staff of the Air Force
1670 Air Force, Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Donley and General Welsh:

We write to you in support of Illinois' Scott Air Force Base as a candidate for the location of the new KC-46A refueling tanker. Scott's world-class refueling capabilities, central location to current and future refueling demand and cost-effective basing make it an ideal candidate to replace the aging KC-135 Stratotanker fleet.

The 126th Air Refueling Wing (ARW) based at Scott is the Air National Guard's (ANG) oldest refueling wing, representing over fifty years of refueling missions and thirty-five years of KC-135 service. Its skilled and seasoned aircrews and maintainers possess an average of 15 years experience with the platform. The 126th ARW's well-established active association with the 906th Air Refueling Squadron (ARS) increases combat capability and efficiency, leveraging existing Guard support capabilities and representing a successful Total Force Integration effort. Both units continue to support ongoing homeland security and global contingency operations, including a six-plane deployment in support of Operations Odyssey Dawn and Unified Protector that responded within twenty-four hours.

Scott's central location and proximity to Air Mobility Command (AMC) adds immense value to the KC-46A's operational capabilities. With the proven ability to serve existing European and Central Command-destined demand, as well as extensive experience in the Pacific theater, the wing is well suited to support AMC and the Tanker Airlift Control Center's (TACC) increased need for tanker support to west-bound traffic resulting from the pivot to the Pacific. Co-location at Scott with AMC also offers the Air Force immediate access to troubleshoot any unanticipated problems with the KC-46A platform and/or association.

The KC-46A's enhanced aeromedical evacuation (AE) capabilities and Scott's extensive AE operations give the Air Force the ability to effectively and efficiently deploy medical personnel worldwide. Instead of leveraging modern mobility aircraft from other bases, the Air Force can activate Scott's own AE teams. Scott houses one of only four active duty aeromedical evacuation squadrons (375th AES) and one of the seventeen reserve

units (932nd AES) Air Force-wide. Deploying these units as needed from a centrally located base reduces the cost and time to deploy medical personnel.

In an era of fiscal challenges, Scott's existing infrastructure, housing, and base operations allow the Air Force to bed down the ANG's first KC-46A's in the most cost effective manner. The 126th ARW's existing KC-135 infrastructure includes state of the art operations facilities, ramp, runway and refueling capabilities, requiring limited military construction to meet KC-46A requirements. Scott's competitive housing allowance rate and base locality pay makes it a fiscally competitive option among other existing active association Air National Guard candidates. The installation possesses available on-base housing, commissary and quality of life programs. Its larger community is extremely supportive of Scott's mission and possesses excellent schools and family resources.

Scott's central location, capable association, and cost effective proposition make it an ideal candidate to serve as the ANG-led Main Operating Base 2. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to welcoming the KC-46A's to Scott.



Mark Kirk
United States Senator

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator