Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

February 9, 2015

Mr. Robert Cardillo
Director
National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency
7500 GEOINT Drive
Springfield, Virginia 22150

Dear Mr. Cardillo:

We write to strongly recommend St. Clair County/Scott Air Force Base as the best possible new home for the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency/West (NGA-West). As the home of Scott Air Force Base (AFB) for almost 100 years, St. Clair County is the clearly superior choice in every respect, including mission security, antiterrorism/force protection, and workforce safety.

The proposed 182-acre Illinois site is immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of Scott Air Force Base and will, in effect, function as an extension of Scott's secure military campus. St. Clair County will provide this entire site – and, if requested, an additional contiguous 200 acres – to NGA at no cost, including any necessary utilities extensions. In addition, the Illinois site is shovel-ready. Unlike other sites under consideration, this entire property has one owner: St. Clair County. It currently consists entirely of farm fields and will present no environmental or infrastructure-related barriers to on-time and on-budget construction.

As you know, the Defense Information Systems Agency-CONUS and the United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) – both headquartered at Scott AFB – are two of NGA West's largest agency clients. Relocating NGA West to Scott AFB site is not only the logical choice from the standpoint of mission synergy, it will also eliminate any potential disruption of data transmission associated with the existing 27-mile fiber-optic cable linking NGA's Missouri facilities with Scott AFB.

As an enhancement to mission synergy, the recently opened Midwest Cyber Center of Excellence adjacent to Scott AFB will work with NGA to ensure a well-trained supply of qualified Cyber workers.

St. Clair County also offers the strongest possible benefit to NGA-West's military and civilian personnel. The Southwestern Illinois community is widely recognized as one of the most supportive military communities in the nation. The Air Force Times ranked Scott AFB as the Number-One Base for Airmen in America, and the Scott-area community has won the coveted Air Mobility Command Community Support Award ("Abilene Trophy") in two of the past three years. More than 650 local businesses participate in the Scott Patriot Program, pledging to provide discounted goods and services to Scott personnel and their families and to hire veterans and service members' spouses. Southwestern Illinois is proud to be known as "Scott Country" – and eagerly awaits the opportunity to expand that military-friendly identity to include "NGA Country" as well.

Selecting St. Clair County would also provide a number of conveniences and benefits for NGA's military and civilian employees:

- Superior Transportation Infrastructure, including the new Interstate 64 Exit 21 at Rieder Road and associated access road improvements for increased vehicle access to Scott-NGA security gates.

- The Shiloh-Scott MetroLink station is less than three miles from the site, and St. Clair County has indicated its willingness to extend MetroLink to a new station at the NGA site.

- MetroLink and other mass transit riders will be eligible for full fare reimbursement under the Department of Defense Mass Transportation Benefit Program, which could save NGA military and civilian employees more than $3,000 annually.

- School districts in communities surrounding Scott AFB are consistently ranked among the best in the region – and area colleges and universities offer a broad array of continuing higher education opportunities.

- NGA's Active Duty, Reserve, and Retired military employees are eligible to use the Scott AFB Commissary and other base amenities.

- Scott's new and modern Military Family Housing may be available for rent to certain NGA personnel, depending upon vacancy rates.

You are no doubt well aware that during the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, the Infrastructure Executive Council (IEC) recommended closing the NGA installations at 2nd Street, St. Louis, Missouri, and Arnold, Missouri; and relocating all functions "to a new facility at Scott Air Force Base." As you know, the NGA West relocation recommendation was removed from the Secretary of Defense's final list at the very last minute – and reportedly "postponed" – due to intelligence budget constraints.

The 2005 BRAC recommendations to relocate both NGA East and West were based upon several justifications, including the importance of locating and upgrading facilities on protected installations; improving mission synergy by collocating functions; improving continuity-of-operations/mission assurance capabilities; and enhancing antiterrorism/force protection. In addition, the recommendation's military judgment included the following about Scott AFB: "Best location for NGA's intelligence mission; enables continued coordination with mission partners and support to national intelligence customers; better access to communications networks; better support for NGA military personnel; improves AT/FP for NGA facilities and workforce."

We appreciate that relocating NGA West to Scott AFB will provide considerable economic benefits to St. Clair County and the Southwestern Illinois region – and we will welcome those impacts. But ultimately, military siting decisions must foremost be based upon what is best for the command and its ability to carry out its mission. On that basis, and in the context of current security challenges both foreign and domestic, we maintain that the 2005 BRAC recommendation is even more valid today. Consequently, we believe there is no question that the Scott AFB/St. Clair County site is in a class by itself and should be chosen as the new home for NGA West.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Mark Kirk
United States Senator

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Mike Bost
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

John Shimkus
Member of Congress

Tammy Duckworth
Member of Congress

Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

Robin Kelly
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Rodney Davis
Member of Congress

Luis Gutierrez
Member of Congress

Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Bob Dold
Member of Congress

Daniel Lipinski
Member of Congress

Darin LaHood
Member of Congress

Peter Roskam
Member of Congress