

South Burlington City Council Resolution in Solidarity with the cities of Burlington and Winooski regarding replacing the F-35A with a safe and quiet aircraft

WHEREAS, South Burlington values the women and men of the Vermont National Guard and endorses their mission to protect the citizens of Vermont;

WHEREAS, South Burlington is the city out of which the Vermont National Guard flies;

WHEREAS, the city of Burlington owns the Burlington International Airport, which is geographically located in the city of South Burlington;

WHEREAS, South Burlington has no legal authority over the flight operations, including those of the Vermont National Guard, at the Burlington International Airport;

WHEREAS, according to the Final United States Air Force F-35A Operational Basing Environmental Impact Statement, there are over 1,900 homes and over 4,600 people in the F-16 65 dB DNL, an area the Federal Government classifies as unsuitable for residential use;

WHEREAS, South Burlington has lost over 200 of work force homes because of the noise of the currently-based F-16s;

WHEREAS, in the Final United States Air Force F-35A Operational Basing Environmental Impact Statement, the Air Force reported that the noise of the F-35A will place over 2,900 homes and over 6,660 people in an area unsuitable for residential use;

WHEREAS, the South Burlington City Council during the 2012 public comment period for the United States Air Force F-35A Operational Basing Environmental Impact Statement, wrote on June 11, 2012 of

- their very strong support for and appreciation for the men and women of VTANG for their service in defense of the nation, their dedication and their, and their families,' sacrifices on behalf of all of us;
- their obligation to question developments, including military developments, that may impact our communities;
- their primary concern being the impacts on our environment and community and not on the mission of the military;
- their many questions and concerns, not the least of which are safety issues related to a new aircraft being used in the heavily populated areas adjacent to Burlington International Airport;

WHEREAS, the South Burlington City Council in their June 11, 2012 letter, expressed their

- concern about the F-35A noise level (68/70 dB DNL) in the Chamberlin Elementary School;
- concern about the F-35A noise level on shift workers such as first responders, firefighters, police, hospital workers, food preparers, etc., who sleep during the day;
- concern about the F-35A noise level on outdoor construction workers and farmers;
- concern about the F-35A noise levels on children's health and cognitive development;
- concern about the F-35A noise levels on property values;

WHEREAS, the South Burlington City Council stated that South Burlington is not a good choice for the F-35 basing;

WHEREAS, the South Burlington Planning Commission, during the 2012 public comment period for the United States Air Force F-35A Operational Basing Environmental Impact Statement, wrote

- it is their charge and responsibility to insure the goals of the city's Comprehensive Plan are achieved;
- it is their responsibility to insure that the goals of the city's Comprehensive Plan include providing adequate affordable housing, preserving existing neighborhoods, and maintaining overall quality of life for residents are achieved;
- about their concern that the noise of the F-16 resulted in a significant loss of affordable single family housing;
- about their concern that the even greater noise impacts from the F-35 will affect significantly more homes and residents;
- about their concern that the even greater noise impacts from the F-35 will affect owners' ability to sell, rent, or remain in their homes;
- about their concern about being able to replace the almost 3,000 existing homes that may very well be deemed incompatible with residential use;
- about their concern about the loss of some of the oldest and most dense housing stock in the city;
- about their concern about the loss of neighborhoods;
- about their concern that the even greater noise impacts from the F-35 will compound the problems of finding affordable housing;

WHEREAS, the South Burlington School Board, during the 2012 public comment period for the United States Air Force F-35A Operational Basing Environmental Impact Statement, wrote

- about their concerns regarding the direct noise impacts on the District's schools, teachers, staff and students and their families;
- about their concerns regarding the impacts of noise on Chamberlin students when they are outdoors, explaining that students are outdoors for at least 45 minutes a day;
- about their concerns regarding a potential decrease in the number of households and associated population and a resultant decrease in the tax base that funds the District's schools, and a decrease in school enrollment;

WHEREAS, the city of South Burlington joined the federal lawsuit as *amicus curiae* against the Secretary of the Air Force in 2016 because "the Sept 2013 Final Environmental Impact for the United States Air Force F-35A Operational Basing ... did not provide adequate information as to noise impacts on the City, or mitigation thereof...and did not provide adequate information as to potential health and safety impacts which could result from noise or an F-35A crash within or near the City";

WHEREAS, the Air Force stated the Vermont Air Guard would continue to have a flying mission regardless of whether or not the F-35A was based at the Burlington International Airport;

WHEREAS, the Air Force assured the public that the Vermont Air Guard would always have a flying mission;

WHEREAS, the Air Force has other military aircraft which are far more compatible with densely populated areas, such as the area around the Burlington International Airport;

WHEREAS, while other types of military aircraft may be available, cargo/transport aircraft, such as the C-130, are examples of aircraft that are compatible with residential areas in that they are very safe and much quieter than fighter aircraft;

WHEREAS, C-130 aircraft are flown by at least 24 other state Guard units;

WHEREAS, other state Air Guard units have switched from fighter aircraft to C-130 and other non-fighter aircraft missions;

WHEREAS, according to the United States Air Force, “The C-130 Hercules performs the tactical portion of the airlift mission. The aircraft is capable of operating from rough dirt strips, and is the prime transport for air dropping troops and equipment into hostile areas. The C-130 operates throughout the U. S. Air Force serving with Air Mobility Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, Air Combat Command, U. S. Air Forces in Europe, Pacific Air Forces, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Components, fulfilling a wide range of operational missions in both peace and war situation. Basic and specialized versions of the aircraft airframe perform a diverse number of roles, including airlift support, Antarctic resupply, aeromedical missions, weather reconnaissance, aerial spray missions, firefighting duties for the U.S. Forest Service and natural disaster relief missions.”

WHEREAS, the noise produced by C-130 is similar to commercial airliners;

WHEREAS, the noise of a C-130 would not result in any homes being in an area unsuitable for residential use;

WHEREAS, the C-130 has been flown since 1955, has over 19 million flight hours, and has a very safe record with a class A mishap rate of 0.83 over it’s lifetime;

WHEREAS, a C-130 would increase the number of crew members at least three-fold, and depending on its mission, could increase crew members over ten-fold;

WHEREAS, acquiring a C-130 mission would likely increase the number of Vermont Air Guard jobs over the jobs associated with the F-16 or the F-35A;

WHEREAS, given the essential role the C-130 plays in military and humanitarian operations, acquiring a C-130 mission would guarantee the Vermont Air National Guard a flying mission in perpetuity;

WHEREAS, the humanitarian mission of the C-130 aligns with Vermont values;

WHEREAS, on March 6, 2018, Burlington city voters approved by a vote of 6,482 (55.3%) to 5,238 (44.7%) the following ballot item:

“Shall we, the voters of the City of Burlington, as part of our strong support for the men and women of the Vermont National Guard, and especially their mission to ‘protect the citizens of Vermont’ advise the City Council to:

1. Request the cancellation of the planned basing of the F-35 at Burlington International Airport, and
2. Request instead low-noise-level equipment with a proven high safety record appropriate for a densely populated area?”

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of South Burlington stands in solidarity with the City of Burlington and the City of Winooski in their request to the United States Air Force to

1. Cancel the basing of the F-35A at the Vermont Air National Guard Station in Burlington, Vermont, and

2. Instead provide an aircraft that is compatible with a densely populated residential area—an aircraft that has a proven high safety record, and an aircraft whose noise will not result in any homes being in the noise zone categorized as unsuitable for residential use.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of South Burlington respectfully requests a written response from the Honorable Secretary of the United States Air Force, Heather Wilson, by May 1, 2018.

APPROVED this 16th day of April, 2018.

SOUTH BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

Helen Riehle, Chair

Meaghan Emery, Vice-Chair

Tim Barritt, Clerk

Tom Chittenden
