

primarily employ air-to-ground ordnance and conduct strafing at the following approved ranges: the 115 FW at the Hardwood Range; the 124 FW at the Saylor Creek and Juniper Butte Ranges; the 125 FW at Townsend Bombing Range; the 127 WG at Grayling Range; and the 187 FW at Camp Shelby.

The F-35A Block 3F aircraft is not “nuclear-capable”; therefore, the F-35A aircraft that would be based at any of these five alternative locations would not have the hardware necessary for a nuclear mission. There are no plans to add the hardware necessary to make these F-35A aircraft nuclear-capable at this time. Only units with a nuclear mission are provided the hardware necessary to carry nuclear weapons; therefore, because none of these five alternatives have a nuclear mission, should any of the aircraft associated with this F-35A beddown ever be fitted with Block 4 upgrades, they still would not be nuclear-capable.

### **Identification of the Preferred Alternatives**

Based on an evaluation of operational parameters, the Secretary of the Air Force has identified the 115 FW in Madison, Wisconsin as the preferred alternative for the 5<sup>th</sup> Operational Beddown, and the 187 FW in Montgomery, Alabama as the preferred alternative for the 6<sup>th</sup> Operational Beddown.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

Comparing and differentiating among alternatives comprises a fundamental premise of NEPA. For the basing alternatives and scenarios identified for this Proposed Action, summaries and comparisons of consequences are presented in Table ES-2.



SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

SEP 26 2019

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for taking the time to discuss your concerns, and those of your constituents, with the draft F-35A Operational Beddown Air National Guard Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The draft EIS analyzes the 115th Fighter Wing (FW), Dane County Regional Airport, Madison, Wisconsin; the 124th FW, Boise Air Terminal, Boise, Idaho; 125th FW, Jacksonville International Airport, Jacksonville, Florida; 127th Wing, Selfridge Air National Guard (ANG) Base, Michigan; and the 187th FW, Montgomery Regional Airport, Montgomery, Alabama.

The draft EIS evaluates the potential environmental impacts with the beddown of F-35A aircraft at two of five alternative ANG locations and will be used to inform the final decision. The draft EIS was made available for public review on August 9, 2019 and the comment period ends September 27, 2019. All substantive comments received during the public comment period will be addressed in the final EIS.

To be transparent and responsive to you and the citizens of Madison, I offer the attached answers to the questions from your August 23, 2019 letter and our September 18, 2019 conversation. As you know, hosting a military installation comes with numerous challenges and opportunities. We stand ready to support you and the Madison community in understanding the environmental process, terminology, findings and analysis.

We are proud the Wisconsin ANG is being considered to receive state-of-the-art 5th Generation aircraft. We are grateful to the city of Madison for 77 years of strong support to Airmen and their families based at the site of the current Dane County Regional Airport. This historic partnership contributed to the consideration of basing our most advanced fighter aircraft at this airfield. Thanks for your continuous support of our mission, our Airmen and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew P. Donovan", is positioned above the printed name.

Matthew P. Donovan  
Acting

Attachment:  
Questions and Answers

cc:  
SAF/AA

**CONGRESSIONAL: ASECAF Letter from Senator Baldwin re: Ops 5 & 6 Draft EIS – Truax, Madison, Wisconsin**

**NOISE:**

Q1: “What Percentage of All F-35A air operations for the 115th take place at Truax?”

A1: The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) used 100% of home station air operations to provide a conservative estimate for the initial F-35 qualification training required for 115 FW pilots. After 115 FW pilots are qualified in the F-35, which is expected to take several years, and begin deployments and off-station training, air operations are expected to be reduced to a level closer to historical home station operations. – see Draft EIS on Section WI2.1.2 Page WI-3.

Q2: “If the assessment accounted for 80% home station training in line with historical data, would that reduce the amount of people affected by noise?”

A2: The Draft EIS did not assess noise profiles assuming 80% home station operations in order to provide a conservative estimate for the initial F-35 potential impacts. After 115 FW pilots are qualified in the F-35, and begin deployments and off-station training, air operations are expected to reduce to historical home station operations and could have an associated reduction in noise.

Q3: “How will air operations and associated impacts change over time?”

A3: The change over time is not currently known. However, there is an expectation that operations may be reduced once pilots are qualified which could result in a rate of home station operations closer to historical levels.

Q4: “When will there be an increase of noise interference, above current missions, that may impact school operations from continuing without interference?”

A4: The Air Force expects the noise to be at its greatest once the full complement of F-35s have been based and are fully operational. As discussed in the Draft EIS (See Section WI3.1.1.2 pg WI-33) under the Proposed Action, four school Points of Interest (POI) would experience increases of 1 to 2 dB Equivalent Noise Level ( $L_{eq}$ ). One school POI would have no change, and one school POI would have a decrease of 2 dB Equivalent Noise Level ( $L_{eq}$ ). However, approximately 80% to 90% of the interfering events under the Proposed Action would continue to be caused by civil operations. The number of interfering events per hour would remain similar to the affected environment except Lake View Elementary and the Richardson school that would experience one additional event per average hour.