



Office of the Mayor

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Mr. Ramon Ortiz
NGB/A4AM
3501 Fetchet Avenue
Joint Base Andrews MD 20762-5157

November 1, 2019

Re: Comments Regarding F-35 Draft Environmental Impact Statement FR #2018-02468

Dear Mr. Ortiz,

The official process of finding a location to “bed-down” F-35 fighter jets in the central section of the United States began in 2016 when five locations were taken under consideration. According to Air National Guard testimony at the Madison Common Council public hearing recently, these locations were identified based on characteristics of their facilities including length of runway, types of buildings, personnel available, etc. In December 2017, Madison’s Truax Field was chosen as a preferred location for F-35 fighter jets. At that time, the Madison community was invited to identify concerns and provide comments during a “scoping” period; in April 2018 the Madison Common Council provided comments¹ which identified concerns, and urged the anticipated Environmental Impact Statement to address the following issues:

1. Neighborhood Characteristics: health & other data
2. Noise Issues
3. Cultural Issues: traditional, archaeological and architectural
4. Water Issues: quantity, quality, stormwater, watersheds and floodplains
5. Hazardous Materials: wastes, toxic substances and contaminated sites

In the April 2018 comments, the Common Council resolved to “remain engaged throughout the entire EIS process to ensure that residents are represented in the decision-making process”.

In August of 2019, the City received notice that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) had been released. Written by an engineering consultant, the document provides numerous estimates of

¹ 2018 Common Council Scoping Comments Document can be accessed at:

<https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6200867&GUID=29B2B4A9-2515-4EA0-8AB5-B4D023F5AAF9>

potential impacts on the community in an effort to respond to issues identified by the City during the scoping period the previous year. The Draft EIS notes, among other issues:

- economic impact would be negligible
- peak noise levels could exceed 100 dB
- households on hundreds of acres would be impacted by noise only some of which could be mitigated, and only by the FAA, through a process the City would not be party to
- low-income and minority communities would be disproportionately impacted, including residents of public and subsidized housing
- children in daycare centers, schools and special needs programs are also in the area impacted by noise

On September 10, 2019, staff from five city departments provided a report analyzing some of the information provided in the Draft EIS and raising further issues on the health and land use impacts of noise, potential for noise mitigation, stormwater and contamination, and the potential for nuclear weapons to be on site in the community. Staff also provided more accurate data on the locations of vulnerable populations than had been provided in the Draft EIS.²

On September 17, 2019, I issued a statement³ demanding more thorough information from the United States Air Force/Air National Guard (USAF/ANG), suggesting they take into consideration the adverse impacts identified in the Draft EIS and the City Staff analysis, and potentially re-evaluate their selection of Truax Field if the Final EIS does not respond to those concerns and provide strategies to affirmatively mitigate the noise and other detrimental impacts of siting F-35s there. That evening, the Common Council took testimony from the public for five hours, followed by two hours of discussion on the final terms of a Resolution⁴ requesting that the Air Force “reconsider the selection of Truax Field as a preferred location until and unless the findings of the EIS are shown to misrepresent the significant environmental impacts to those living, working, and visiting the north and east sides of Madison”.

Highlights from public testimony at the Common Council on the evening of 9/17/19 and into the morning hours of 9/18/19 included the following:

- noise impacts, especially for those most vulnerable (children, refugees, veterans)
- greater noise impact of brief intermittent/stochastic/impulse sound
- relative noise of F-35s compared to F-16s
- unremediated PFAs contamination on the site
- inaccessibility of Alliant Center public input session to impacted residents

² That staff report can be found here:

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/documents/F35%20EIS%20staff%20analysis%209-10-19.pdf> and the associated maps can be found here:

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/documents/Maps%20for%20EIS%20analysis%209-10-19.pdf>

³ Statement available here: <https://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/news/statement-from-mayor-rhodes-conway-re-f-35-environmental-impact-statement>

⁴ Full text of the 2019 Common Council Resolution available here:

<https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7719760&GUID=A53F3230-1F25-42E7-93DC-69AB5E12D8E6>

- comparatively less impact on residential areas of other potential air base locations
- key misinformation from the Draft EIS was perpetuated (“uninhabitable homes,” etc.)

The entire meeting, including the public comments, is available for viewing online,⁵ and I strongly encourage you to view the hearing, as most of the testimony was directed towards, or is directly relevant to, the Air Force’s decision making process.

Based on our staff analysis, these comments and more, the City of Madison Mayor’s Office hereby submits the following substantive comments with expectations that they will be addressed in the Final EIS, and the Secretary of the Air Force will reconsider listing Truax Field as a preferred location before making a final decision on where to bed-down the F-35 fighter jets.

1. Process Concerns:

Flaws in the EIS process have restricted the time and information available to understand the complex issues involved, the USAF/ANG located the sole public meeting far from residents most likely to be negatively affected, and provided no translation of documents or interpretation for non-English speaking populations.

While the draft EIS may check the box of what public process and participation needs to occur, Madison and its residents expect better and more accurate information and a process accessible to all residents. The USAF/ANG public hearing on September 12 at the Alliant Energy Center was more than an hour via public transportation from the most impacted areas, which is particularly concerning given the higher rate of low-income households impacted. The impacted area contains a significant number of non-English speaking households, but it appears that all documents related to this process are only available in English. Under Executive Order 13166 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Federal Agencies must provide individuals with limited English proficiency with meaningful access to federally conducted and federally funded programs and activities.

Questions for the USAF/ANG:

1. Why was the Aliant Energy Center selected for the public hearing?
2. What other options closer to the impacted area were investigated?
3. Why didn’t the USAF/ANG provide, or coordinate with the City to provide, better transportation options for the often transit-dependent residents living in the areas most impacted?
4. Why wasn’t the EIS information translated into other languages? Were any efforts made to comply with Executive Order 13166 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964?

⁵ Video of the full Common Council meeting can be found here:
<https://media.cityofmadison.com/Mediasite/Showcase/madison-city-channel/Presentation/b003fb5745924c59a0d18f02a60ffd671d>

2. Demographics:

The EIS acknowledges disparate impacts on low income Madison residents and communities of color, but our staff analysis suggests its methodology understated their significance. The USAF/ANG should further evaluate the impacts on children in daycare centers, schools and special needs programs in the area as well as residents of low income housing located in the areas most impacted by the noise of jet operations.

The EIS provides a basic level analysis of land use and the population that may be impacted within the 65 dB DNL curve. To do this, EIS authors manually counted residential structures and used 2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Census block group data to estimate impacted populations. The EIS estimated 1,318 households and 2,766 residents inside the 65 dB DNL curve. Demographic data was evaluated at the Census block group level by the EIS, including race/ethnicity, poverty and population under 18. The EIS used 20% of the population in poverty and 50% of the population identifying as a minority as thresholds to flag impacted block groups.

While the 50% minority rate may be a national standard for environmental impact statements, it appears to be a very high bar for measuring impacts on communities of color particularly in Madison and Dane County, where persons of color make up 26% and 20% of the population respectively. Using this metric, the only block groups flagged for having a minority population are west of the airport, generally outside the 65 dB DNL curve. **Nearly every impacted area within the City of Madison belongs to a census tract with rates of persons of color well above the city- and county-wide averages.** The block group with the largest expansion of the impacted area (Carpenter Ridgeway) is comprised of 43.9% persons of color. While the EIS acknowledges it has a disproportional impact on persons of color, its methodology results in this issue being understated.

The threshold for poverty appears more in line with Madison (26%) and Dane County (20%) averages. Like the persons of color statistic above, **nearly every block group within the impacted area has poverty rates above the city-wide average.**

It should also be noted that **there are several concentrations of poverty and persons of color just outside the 65 dB DNL contour**, including the CDA Truax housing, CDA Webb-Rethke townhomes and other housing near Worthington Park, and near the intersection of Packers Avenue and Northport Drive. While these areas will experience virtually identical noise exposure as residents who live on the contour line, they will not be eligible for federal sound mitigation funding through the Noise Compatibility Program. If Truax is selected for future F-35s, it's a reasonable conclusion that non-mitigated areas immediately adjacent to but outside the 65 dB DNL contour may experience more significant impacts than mitigated (soundproofed) residences inside the impacted area.

In addition to CDA owned properties, there are more than 80 subsidized low-income housing units present in the impacted area. Most of these units are located in the recently built Rethke Terrace, which provides permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless individuals and received significant support from the City's Affordable Housing Fund. In total, nearly 800 subsidized low income housing

units are within 1,500 feet of the 65 dB DNL contour.

Rents and home values inside the 65 dB DNL contour are significantly more affordable than the City as a whole. Assessments of homes and condominiums inside the impacted area have a median value of \$174,400 compared to the Madison median of \$254,900. Rents are generally 10-20% lower than Madison's median rent according to census block level 5-year data. With relatively rapid housing cost increases seen across Madison and relative scarcity of affordable neighborhoods, these areas play an important role in Madison's overall housing picture. Preserving these as livable neighborhoods going forward, either through a no change scenario or one with sound impact minimization or mitigation, is certainly in Madison's best interest.

Finally, aside from Lakeview Elementary and The Richardson School, there are many pre-schools, public, and private schools nearby that may be impacted by increased noise levels that are not accounted for in the EIS. These include, Blackhawk Middle School, Gompers Elementary, Isthmus Montessori Academy, Shabazz High School, Sherman Middle School, Emerson Elementary School, East High School, Hawthorn Elementary School, Lowell Elementary School, Whitehorse Middle School, Schenk Elementary School, St. Dennis Grade School, Madison Baptist Academy, Sandburg Elementary, Eastside Evangelical Lutheran Academy, and potentially others.

A map of these potentially impacted schools is attached.

Questions for USAF/ANG:

1. Why was the arbitrary level of 50% of the population identifying as a minority used as the threshold for identifying impacted block groups?
2. What is the impact of using an alternative definition of any block group that contains more people of color than the area median?
3. Why were concentrations of vulnerable populations, including schools, not taken into account in the draft EIS? How will that be remedied in the final EIS?

3. Impact on Public Housing Investments

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority, the Madison Community Development Authority, the City of Madison and other private non-profit entities have invested significant funds into the creation of affordable housing in the neighborhoods surrounding Truax Field. The final EIS must take into account these investments and the potential impact of the bed-down on them.

Madison's Community Development Authority (CDA) governs the city's 916 public and multifamily housing units. The focus of this housing is to "provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities." The CDA is charged with upholding Wisconsin State statute (Wis. Stat. § 66.1201) to operate in the public interest of providing safe and sanitary housing for vulnerable residents.

There are multiple CDA properties, as well as many low-income housing units, within or very near to the 65 dB DNL contour presented in the Draft EIS. In particular, the Truax Park Apartments and the Webb-Rethke townhomes are located on the border of the 65 dB DNL contour. Demographics for individuals and families living on this border in CDA public housing properties are as follows:

Resident Demographics

	# of		<u>Head-Of-Household Demographics</u>			
	# Units	People	Elderly	Disabled	Persons of Color	Low-Income
Truax Park Apartments	187	476	14%	44%	67%	100%
Webb/Rethke Apartments	36	125	15%	48%	85%	100%
	<u>223</u>	<u>601</u>				

The draft EIS has not adequately analyzed the impact of the proposed F-35 bed-down on these properties. **The draft EIS states that 551 people will be impacted by the 65-70 dB DNL contour (2019, p. WI-24), however, the population at these two properties alone is 600 residents over the total number of affected residents accounted for in the draft EIS.**

Portions of the Truax Park Apartments housing project site received substantial modernization through building rehabilitation in 2011 (71 units) and redevelopment in 2015 (40 units), with approximately \$13,602,216 invested in Phase 1 capital improvements and \$8,164,777 invested in Phase 2 capital improvements. The remaining 76 functional units at Truax Park Apartments and the Webb-Rethke Townhomes have incurred capital improvement costs of \$1,002,954 since 2015. Truax Park Apartments and Webb-Rethke Townhomes must operate as low-income public housing in a heavily regulated environment. Redeveloped units at Truax must also be operated in a manner consistent with its treatment as a partnership for federal and state low-income housing tax credits. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) emphasizes and measures a public housing project’s performance in keeping available units occupied. Being located on the border of the 65 dB DNL contour could result in higher vacancies. The negative impact of maintaining a low occupancy rate at these properties would result in a low performance score with HUD, which in turn, would reduce federal public housing subsidy to Truax Park Apartments and Webb-Rethke Townhomes.

The inclusion of the CDA properties in the final EIS is particularly important because, according to the draft EIS, “upon completion of the Final EIS, a mitigation plan will be prepared” (2019, p. WI-17). Given this stipulation, the 600 residents on the border of the 65 dB DNL contour are at risk of being unacknowledged and left without recourse to possible mitigation considerations.

Considering this information, the CDA is requesting that the USAF/ANG include these public housing complexes in the noise impact analysis in the final version of the environmental impact statement. Not only are these residents potentially impacted by the F-35 bed-down, they are also limited in their ability to move away from the Truax area in the event of adverse impacts.

Questions for USAF/ANG:

1. Why were these critical properties not included in the EIS analysis?
2. Has HUD been consulted in the decision making process around this bed-down, given their investment of significant funds into our community, and this area in particular?

4. Contamination:

Truax Field is known to be contaminated by PFAS chemicals that are already threatening Madison's water supply. Existing contamination must be investigated, documented, and a material management plan developed prior to any construction on the site. The final EIS should specify how the USAF/ANG intends to cooperate with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to complete these steps and comply with applicable regulations.

The most urgent environmental issue at Truax Field is contamination from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) associated with the long-term and widespread use of aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF). Contamination from PFAS fluorosurfactants in AFFF has extensively contaminated soil and groundwater throughout the base. Base operations appear to have also contaminated the nearby public drinking water well, Unit Well 15, which the City the Madison has temporarily shut down as a precaution. The long-chain PFAS present on the 115th Fighter Wing (115 FW) include perfluorooctanoate (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), both of which are recognized as environmentally persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic to human health.

In response to this extensive contamination, the City of Madison has five requests. First, the City of Madison requests that the environmental site investigation into PFAS contamination on the 115 FW to be completed under Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource (WDNR) supervision and in full accordance with the Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 700 Series. The March 2019 report entitled *Final Report FY16 Phase 1 Regional Site Inspections for Perfluorinated Compounds: Truax Field Air National Guard Base, Madison, Wisconsin* was only the first step in a site investigation. The WDNR has clearly communicated that additional sampling is required to define the magnitude and extent of PFAS contamination in soil, shallow groundwater, deep groundwater, surface water, and sediment. A complete investigation shall include sampling off the 115 FW using multi-depth well nests to fully detect and model the contaminant plume migration between the base and Unit Well 15. The investigation shall also include sampling surface water and sediment in the adjacent Starkweather Creek.

Second, as required under Wisconsin Administrative Code ch. NR 718, the 115 FW shall obtain WDNR approval of a Material Management Plan (MMP) prior to the start of any construction. Construction involving the excavation of soil or dewatering of groundwater cannot safely and legally be conducted based on the environmental results presently available. The MMP shall address how soil and groundwater contamination will be managed on and off the 115 FW during construction. Contaminated soil excavated from the 115 FW is a solid waste and shall be managed in compliance with Wisconsin Statutes ch. 292 and Wis. Admin. Code chs. NR 500 to 538.

Third, the City of Madison wants PFAS contamination resulting from actions on the 115 FW to be fully remediated under WDNR supervision and in full accordance with Wis. Admin. Code NR 700 Series. While the 2018 site investigation report identified significant contamination, no remedial action has been planned. Consequently, contamination from the 115 FW is actively being pushed further into the environment with each precipitation event. Groundwater contamination from the 115 FW will impact Unit Well 15 for decades to come; immediate source removal of contaminated soil may lessen these impacts. The City has been notified that because the impacts to Unit Well 15 are less than the Federal EPA's health advisories for PFOA and PFOS, remediation of the 115 FW is "not a priority." The City of Madison does not accept this assessment: 115 FW operations have contaminated soil and groundwater with PFAS on and off the base, and the contamination shall be remediated per federal and state statutes.

Fourth, in a July 25, 2018 letter to the WDNR, the 115 FW accepted responsibility for conducting site investigations into potential PFAS contamination on two former fire training burn pits located at International Lane and Darwin Road and at 1750 Person Street in Madison, WI. However, no additional work has taken place on either site. The City requests that the 115 FW honor its commitment to conduct these historic burn pit site investigations no later than FY2020.

The EIS states that the 115 FW will "coordinate with the WDNR regarding proposed construction near Environmental Repair Program sites, including PFAS PRLs" (p. 2-40). However, the WDNR has made persistent requests to the 115 FW for completion of the PFAS site investigation, investigation into the two former burn pits, and for a Material Management Plan and these requests are being ignored. Historically, the 115 FW and the WDNR have had a productive and cooperative relationship that has led to the remediation of nine other contaminant sites. The City's fifth request is that the EIS specifically outline how the 115 FW will cooperate with the WDNR to: complete the PFAS site investigation, safely manage materials during construction, and remediate the remaining PFAS contamination. The EIS shall include reference the WDNR's Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) on the web (BOTW) as a place where citizens can download relevant environmental documents associated with remediation of the 115 FW. Specifically, the EIS shall document that the 115 FW is an open contaminant site with the WDNR under BRRTS #02-13-581254.

Last, the Madison Water Utility Board adopted a statement⁶ which says, in part, "The Madison Water Utility Board urges the Department of Defense and United States Air Force to complete the PFAs investigation, coordinating fully with WDNR; remediate the contamination, and assume the costs borne by the Madison Water Utility rate payers to provide adequate treatment for PFAs at Well 15 or replace the affected well. We look forward to the Air Force and the 115th Fighter Wing acting as good neighbors, who share our goal of protecting the safety and health of our shared community, before adding additional infrastructure and jet capability at the Truax base."

⁶ That Water Utility Board statement is available here: <https://www.cityofmadison.com/water/news/madison-water-utility-board-statement-on-proposed-air-national-guard-f-35a-operational-beddown>

Questions for USAF/ANG:

1. What are the true costs of dealing with existing PFAs contamination? Are those accounted for in the EIS?
2. How will the final EIS address the prevention of future PFAs contamination?

5. Stormwater:

Adding 1.7 acres of impervious surface at Truax Field would increase the risk of flooding in the Starkweather Creek Watershed. To mitigate these negative impacts, the USAF/ANG must comply with the City's stormwater regulations and requirements. Further, it is apparent that runoff from the site is already contaminated by PFAs. The EIS must include the impacts (financial and environmental) of remediating this existing problem in addition to any construction impacts.

The EIS discusses construction activity needed if Truax Field is selected to receive F-35s. The EIS indicates these changes would add a total of 1.7 acres of impervious area. Added impervious surface would be near existing ANG facilities, outside the significant area of floodplain to the north runway 14-32 and west of the airport.

On October 7th, 2019, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) released PFAS test results of water from Starkweather Creek,⁷ which flows adjacent to Truax Field. The WDNR tested six surface water bodies suspected of being contaminated by PFAS, and the concentrations in Starkweather Creek were the highest in the state. Specifically, the study detected perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) at 270 ng/l and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) at 43 ng/l. The WDNR study identified the only known upstream PFAS source as the Truax Field Air National Guard Base. There is no doubt that PFAS contamination at Truax Field is actively being released into the environment, further contaminating Starkweather Creek, Lake Monona, and groundwater in the City of Madison.

I am concerned that construction activities on the Truax ANG Base will disturb soil contaminated with PFAS. Traditional erosion control measures can stop sediment from entering Starkweather Creek, but they will not stop the movement of PFAS contamination. A site investigation conducted under WDNR supervision and in full accordance with the Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 700 Series has not been completed for the base. As such, any excavation of soil risks releasing more PFAS contamination into Starkweather Creek and Lake Monona, exposing residents who swim in this lake as well as those who fish there for sustenance.

The draft EIS recommends that a "Media Management Plan" be established to monitor PFAS levels and manage the contamination during construction. However, the draft EIS but does not provide estimates for the costs associating with managing the contamination during the construction phase, nor does it provide information as to which agencies would be available to cover these costs. The final EIS

⁷ Those results are available here:

<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Contaminants/documents/pfas/SurfaceWaterReport20191015.pdf>

must include an analysis of the costs to contain and remediate PFAS on the planned construction site.

All construction activity would need to comply with Wisconsin standards including NR-116 (floodplain) and NR-151 (water quality and limited detention). Madison ordinances (MGO 37) have significantly more water quality and detention (flood control) requirements than the state standards. Based on the historic rain events experienced on the Westside of Madison and Dane County last year, and the well documented increase in frequency of intense storm events, Madison is currently working to revise its code to include additional stormwater requirements which would likely be in place if and when construction occurs.

I strongly recommend that the redevelopment of the 115th Fighter Wing comply with Madison's proposed stormwater management standards and the new development comply with existing standards which for this site would include 80% total suspended solids control, 90% infiltration and 100 year detention.

Draft stormwater requirements state that redevelopment should meet the following criteria:

1. Reduce peak runoff rates from the site by 15% compared to existing conditions during a 10-year design storm.
2. Reduce runoff volumes from the site by 5% compared to existing conditions during a 10-year design storm.
3. The required rate and volume reductions shall be completed, using green infrastructure that captures at least the first 1/2 inch of rainfall.
4. The following guidance shall be used in interpreting this code:
 - a. An intensive greenroof with a media depth of 12" or more shall be considered to result in no runoff during a 10-year design storm and this reduction may be used to offset volumes and rates for the remainder of the site.
 - b. An extensive greenroof with media depth of a minimum of 4" shall be considered to be pervious for the purpose of meeting the lot coverage described above.
 - c. Pervious pavement designed to comply with the Wisconsin WDNR's guidance for post construction stormwater practices shall be considered to be pervious for the purposes of meeting the percent lot coverage described above.

Questions for USAF/ANG:

1. What are the expected costs to contain and remediate PFAS on the planned construction site?
2. What stormwater management standards does the Air Force anticipate meeting during and after construction?

6. Noise:

The sound modeling provided in the EIS created considerable confusion and deep community concern about the type and levels of noise associated with F-35 operations. The Air National Guard should provide information more specific to its expected operations at Truax Field including number of flights, sound contours, use of afterburners, and more.

As has been widely discussed, replacement of F-16s with F-35s would result in an increase in overall loudness in areas near Dane County Regional Airport and Truax Field. The most discussed statistic in the EIS is Day Night Average Sound Level (DNL), a cumulative measure of multiple flights and engine maintenance that incorporates sound from both military and civilian aircraft. This metric is intended to provide an overall picture of noise exposures, rather than a measure of specific sound events. As a result, it isn't directly comparable to other sound level statistics measured in decibels.

The DNLs were generated by a model that factors:

- aircraft type and noise profiles
- number of flights for each aircraft type
- frequency of specific approach and departure paths (i.e. how often each runway is used)

In 1983, the FAA published [Noise Control and Compatibility For Airports](#), an advisory document addressing aircraft noise and surrounding land uses. The document established a standard methodology for measuring cumulative noise exposure and identifies land uses that are often more sensitive to noise. Through this document, the FAA determined the 65 dB DNL contour is the noise exposure level where land use compatibility issues may begin to arise surrounding airports. This document is the source of the land use compatibility table included in the draft EIS on page 3-33.

FAA's advisory document appears tailored toward addressing future use of vacant property and redevelopments surrounding airports by recommending land uses or construction techniques that minimize sound impacts to users. It's important to clarify that the document's use of the term "Incompatible" does not mean uninhabitable, nor is it a substitute for or superseding other local land use decisions. **In effect, FAA designations of incompatible and conditionally compatible land uses with the 65dB DNL curve defines where federal funding can be used to minimize and mitigate noise exposure for existing uses.** The document also begins to discuss the Part 150 Noise Compatibility Program, which grants federal Airport Improvement Program funds to airports to carry out federally approved noise mitigation techniques. The Noise Compatibility Program will be discussed in greater detail later in this memo.

The sound contour expansion modeled in the EIS is attributable to two primary factors: the change in sound level associated with the F-35s and the increased number of flights planned. Because the sound contours are Day Night Average Sound Level, increased quantity flight events will increase the cumulative daily sound exposure and result in larger contours.

There has been extensive discussion locally related to the assumptions used to create the acoustical modeling and how those reflected or deviated from practices occurring or likely to occur. While it's understood the larger EIS process needs standard assumptions for an apples to apples comparison amongst locations considered, the analysis as presented did not appear to accurately or effectively communicate the sound experience for Madison residents for either the current F-16s or proposed F-35s. The draft EIS states afterburners will not be needed on F-35s, but models them anyway for 5% of takeoffs (down from 60% use on F-16s). It models a 47% temporary increase in flight activity while transitioning and discusses a long-term 27% increase after transitioning to F-35s without any increase in aircraft and only a possibility of adding one additional pilot. It discussed the construction of new

flight simulators, but doesn't account for how many flights this may reduce. Average flight length in the EIS, the basis for estimating how many flights would occur, is 10% shorter than what is currently flow with F-16s. The EIS doesn't reflect the current Air National Guard estimate of a 20% reduction in F-16 arrivals and departures at Truax associated with offsite operations or due to the unique air-to-air refueling operations with Milwaukee's 128th Air Refueling Wing.

Given the above inconsistencies in modeling, and that residents are very accurately pointing out that peak volume levels they hear with the current F-16s are often far louder than 65 dB, the concern for what could happen to Madison's neighborhoods is entirely valid. DNL may be the standard for determining federal mitigation funding, but it's a very poor metric for communicating very loud but relatively infrequent sound experiences. The draft EIS seems to create more questions than it answers, leading many to seek outside information which may or may not be valid or transferable to Madison.

Health consequences associated with noise exposure are dependent on the duration of exposure, intensity (decibel level), and how often a population is exposed. **Health impacts associated with long term exposure to noise levels similar to those expected from the F-35s include: sleep disturbance, decreased school performance, increased levels of stress, hearing impairment, annoyance, hypertension, and heart disease.** FAA rules restrict funding for sound mitigation to permanent structures and would presumably not be applicable to the mobile home park on Parkers Avenue, which contains 312 units per City of Madison property data. In addition, this funding would not be applicable to residential units and structures lying just outside the 65 dB DNL contour lines, which include subsidized housing units, the Madison College campus, and Hawthorne Elementary School. A broader spatial consideration of noise exposure impact and consequences should be considered to protect these vulnerable populations.

Questions for USAF/ANG:

1. Are the noise/sound analyses in the Draft EIS specific to Madison and the conditions and practices of Truax Field?
2. What is the actual average number of locally-based F-16 flight operations at Truax per year? How many additional operations would be expected when there is no anticipated increase in planes and only one additional pilot?
3. How many operations are reduced as a result of offsite operations, deployment, winter weather conditions, aerial refueling with the 128th Refueling Wing and the proposed use of two new training simulators?
4. Please provide a detailed timeline and explanation of how the "alert mission" would be handled with the arrival of F-35s; if F-16s are drawn down with the arrival of F-35s as stated in the EIS, what is the actual increase in flights that could be expected during the transition between fleets?
5. Please provide a map showing existing and proposed contours of peak volumes using the Sound Exposure Level, SEL, or Lmax measures instead of DNL. The draft EIS only includes a table of SEL for select locations.

6. Please provide a map showing the most recent measured DNL at Truax compared to modeling of current F-16s.⁸
7. Please provide a map including 60 and 55dB DNL contours.
8. Under what circumstances would afterburners on the F-35s be required at Truax? How often would these circumstances occur?
9. Under what circumstances would F-35s need to take off to the south using runway 18? How strong of a tailwind can the F-35 safely take off with, if doing so allows it to use runway 36 taking off to the north?
10. What mitigation measures are available for mobile home parks?

7. Environmental Concerns:

Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park and Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area is in the impacted area, but it is not considered in the Draft EIS. Impacts to federally- and state-protected species must be considered in the EIS.

Cherokee Marsh is the largest wetland in Dane County and has been declared a Wetland Gem by the Wisconsin Wetlands Association. Most of Cherokee Marsh's over 2000 acres of wetland lies immediately to the north and west of the north-south runway of the Dane County Airport. The Marsh is home to a multitude of species, including several protected under the Migratory Bird Act, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and the Wisconsin Endangered Species Act.⁹

Questions for USAF/ANG:

1. Why is the survey of federal- and state-listed species confined to the airport property?
2. Why are impacts on species in surrounding areas not included in the draft EIS?

Conclusion

The City of Madison, including our Common Council, our School Board,¹⁰ many members of our County Board,¹¹ our Community Development Authority Board, our Water Utility Board, our Sustainable Madison Committee, multiple community groups, and numerous residents have all expressed grave concerns with the potential impacts of an operational bed-down of F-35s at Truax Field. Even proponents of the bed-down question whether the draft EIS takes into account all the relevant factors. It is critical that the USAF substantially address the issues we have raised here in the final EIS.

⁸ An older version of a similar map can be found in this document on pages 21-22:

<https://www.msnaairport.com/documents/pdf/2013-%20OCT%20NAS.pdf>

⁹ A list of potentially impacted species is available at: <https://www.safeskiescleanwaterwi.org/comment-from-the-board-of-the-friends-of-cherokee-marsh-about-eis-for-f-35-at-truax/>

¹⁰ Resolution available here:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/wi/mmsd/Board.nsf/files/BG7K3Q4FEB29/\\$file/BOE%20resolution%20on%20F-35s%20at%20Truax-Final.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/wi/mmsd/Board.nsf/files/BG7K3Q4FEB29/$file/BOE%20resolution%20on%20F-35s%20at%20Truax-Final.pdf)

¹¹ Letter available here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cvGmaky9lpxxD-lcBdfG0pMlAnfwo_JE/view

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Once the true potential environmental impacts of an F-35 bed-down at Truax Field are known, it is incumbent on the USAF/ANG to consider carefully its choice of preferred location. If there are options that represent less harm to communities and the environment, as it appears in the draft EIS, those options should be preferred. If preferred locations, such as Madison, are known to have significant negative impacts as shown in the final EIS, the USAF must be prepared to prevent and/or fully mitigate those impacts. Absent that, it will not be possible for me to support the selection of Madison for this bed-down.

I look forward to your detailed response to these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SRConway". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Satya Rhodes-Conway
Mayor of Madison, WI

ATTACHMENTS:

Map of Schools Near Truax Field
Revised CDA Statement
Sustainable Madison Committee Statement
Madison Water Utility Board Statement

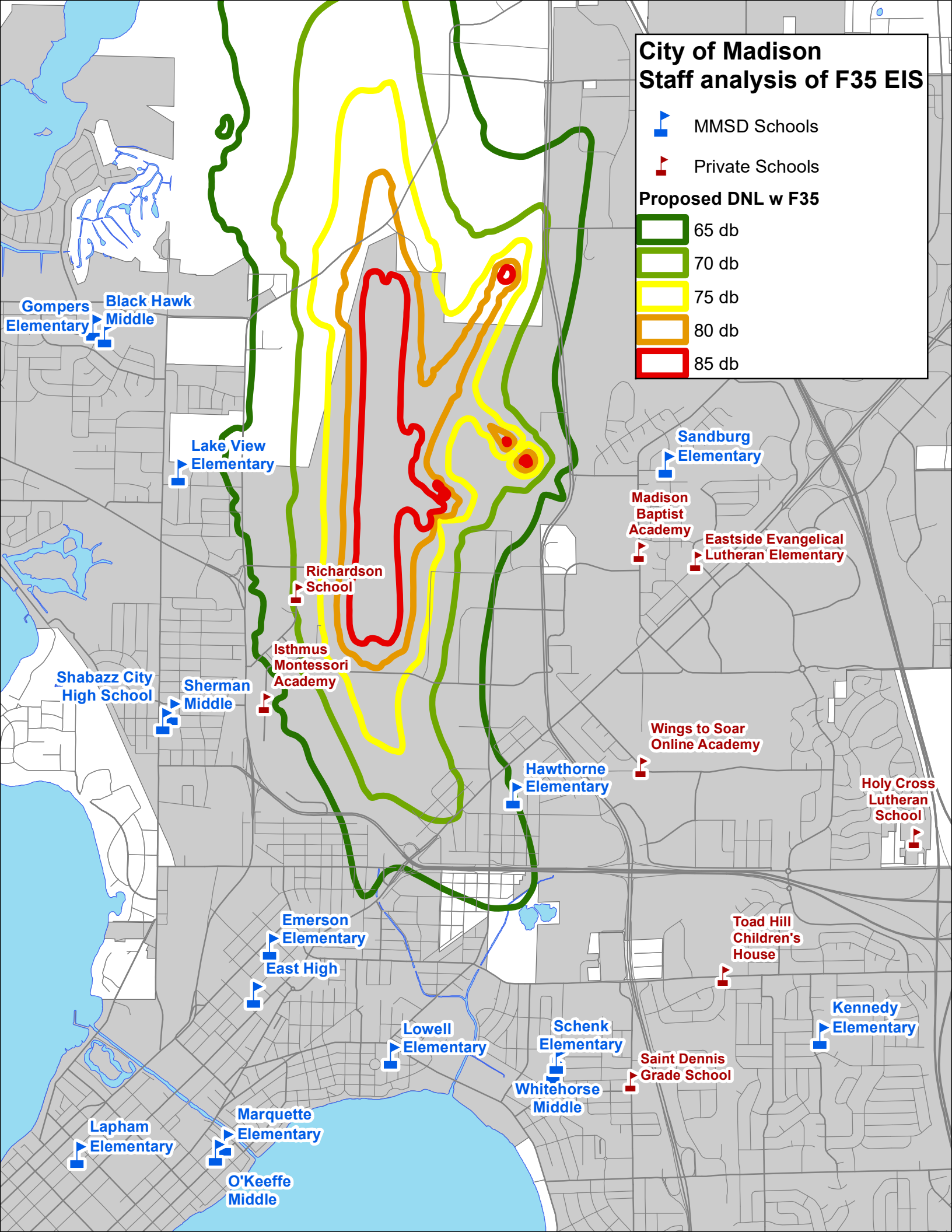
City of Madison Staff analysis of F35 EIS

 MMSD Schools

 Private Schools

Proposed DNL w F35

-  65 db
-  70 db
-  75 db
-  80 db
-  85 db



Gompers Elementary
Black Hawk Middle

Lake View Elementary

Sandburg Elementary

Madison Baptist Academy

Eastside Evangelical Lutheran Elementary

Richardson School

Isthmus Montessori Academy

Shabazz City High School

Sherman Middle

Wings to Soar Online Academy

Hawthorne Elementary

Holy Cross Lutheran School

Emerson Elementary

East High

Toad Hill Children's House

Lowell Elementary

Schenk Elementary

Kennedy Elementary

Saint Dennis Grade School

Whitehorse Middle

Lapham Elementary

Marquette Elementary

O'Keeffe Middle



CommunityDevelopmentAuthority

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MEMO

To: Mr. Ramon Ortiz
NGB/A4AM
3501 Fetchet Avenue
Joint Base Andrews MD 20762-5157
Email: usaf.jbanafw.ngb-a4.mbx.a4a-nepa-comments@mail.mil

From: Community Development Authority
City of Madison, Wisconsin

Date: October 30, 2019

RE: FR# 2018-02468

CDA Statement on Proposed Air National Guard F-35A Operational Beddown

Madison's Community Development Authority (CDA) governs the city's 916 public and multifamily housing units. The focus of this housing is to "provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities" (<https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/housing/public-housing/316/>). The CDA is charged with upholding Wisconsin State statute (Wis. Stat. § 66.1201) to operate in the public interest of providing safe and sanitary housing for vulnerable residents.

There are multiple CDA properties, as well as many low-income housing units, within or very near to the 65 dB DNL contour presented in the *Draft United States Air Force F-35A Operational Beddown Air National Guard Environmental Impact Statement*, which was released in August of 2019. In particular, the Truax Park Apartments and the Webb-Rethke townhomes are located on the border of the 65 dB DNL contour. Demographics for individuals and families living on this border in CDA public housing properties are as follows:

Resident Demographics

	# Units	# of People	Head-Of-Household Demographics			
			Elderly	Disabled	Persons of Color	Low- Income
Truax Park Apartments	187	476	14%	44%	67%	100%
Webb/Rethke Townhomes	36	125	15%	48%	85%	100%
	223	601				

The draft EIS has not adequately analyzed the impact of the proposed F-35 beddown on these properties. The draft EIS states that 551 people will be impacted by the 65-70 dB DNL contour (2019, p. WI-24), however, the population at these two properties alone is 600 residents— over the total number of affected residents accounted for in the draft EIS. Portions of the Truax Park Apartments housing project site received substantial modernization through building rehabilitation in 2011 (71 units) and redevelopment in 2015 (40 units), with approximately \$13,602,216 invested in Phase 1 capital improvements and \$8,164,777 invested in Phase 2 capital improvements. The remaining 76 functional units at Truax Park Apartments and the Webb-Rethke Townhomes have incurred capital improvement costs of \$1,002,954 since 2015.

Truax Park Apartments and Webb-Rethke Townhomes must operate as low-income public housing in a heavily regulated environment. Redeveloped units at Truax must also be operated in a manner consistent with its treatment as a partnership for federal and state low-income housing tax credits. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) emphasizes and measures a public housing project’s performance in keeping available units occupied. Being located on the border of the 65 dB DNL contour would likely result in higher vacancies. The negative impact of maintaining a low occupancy rate at these properties would

result in a low performance score with HUD, which in turn, would reduce federal public housing subsidy to Truax Park Apartments and Webb-Rethke Townhomes.

The inclusion of the CDA properties in the final EIS is particularly important because, according to the draft EIS, “upon completion of the Final EIS, a mitigation plan will be prepared” (2019, p. WI-17). Given this stipulation, the 600 residents on the border of the 65 dB DNL contour are at risk of being unacknowledged and left without recourse to possible mitigation considerations.

Considering this information, the CDA is requesting that the US Air Force include these public housing complexes in the noise impact analysis in the final version of the environmental impact statement. Not only are these residents potentially impacted by the F-35 beddown, they are also limited in their ability to move away from the Truax area in the event of adverse impacts.

The Community Development Authority requests that the Air National Guard revise their environmental impact statement to include consideration of CDA properties, particularly the Truax Park apartments and the Webb-Rethke townhomes.



SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

Date: September 24, 2019

To: Ramon Ortiz, 35A EIS Project Manager

From: Lauren Cnare, Madison Water Utility Board President

RE: Madison Water Utility Board Response to EIS
FR#2018-02468

The Madison Water Utility Board (the Board) is established to direct the outcomes of the Madison Water Utility (MWU) in fulfilling its responsibility to provide safe, affordable and adequate water for drinking, household and business uses, and fire protection to the residents and visitors of MWU's service area in Dane County.

Of its many duties, the identification, public communication, monitoring and mitigation of drinking water contamination is a primary activity of the Utility. Monitoring and mitigation are both critical and costly activities, affecting both the affordability and adequacy of water for our area.

In the recent months, MWU, the Board and citizens of Madison have been working together to understand, quantify and assess the effects of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAs, now found in Well 15. The well is located less than a mile from Truax Field, where PFAs chemicals have been detected and reported at high levels in groundwater. In our community, there is considerable concern and demand for action to respond to this risk. The Board is actively engaged in exploring actions and uniting all partners in understanding and plans to protect against a public health threat.

The Air National Guard Base has been identified as a major source of PFAs contamination. While an investigation is underway, steps required by the Wisconsin DNR (WDNR) to further investigate the extent of the contamination have not yet been taken, and the Department of Defense has not considered this a priority site for mitigation.

Further, the Board concurs with the following section of the City of Madison Planning Division F35 EIS Staff Analysis, published September 10, 2019: The Department of Defense and the Air National Guard cannot safely and legally perform the planned construction activities without a complete site investigation that defines the extent and nature of PFAs contamination in soil and groundwater. The WDNR will require a materials management plan for any areas of the base impacted by construction, describing how excavated soil and dewatering will be managed. The 115 FW does not have enough information presently to do this. This investigation should be

completed with full coordination with WDNR, and remediation of the contamination should take place concurrently in the event of a F-35 transition.

This is not an acceptable position for Madison and its residents, who rightfully expect to have clean and safe drinking water available to them without bearing the high cost of additionally treating or replacing productive drinking water wells.

Until further steps are taken to define the extent, nature and probable path of the soil and groundwater contamination, MWU's rate payers are left with an unknown cost and timeline should treatment be needed at Well 15.

The Madison Water Utility Board urges the Department of Defense and United States Air Force to complete the PFAs investigation, coordinating fully with WDNR; remediate the contamination, and assume the costs borne by the Madison Water Utility rate payers to provide adequate treatment for PFAs at Well 15 or replace the affected well. We look forward to the Air Force and the 115 Fighter Wing acting as good neighbors, who share our goal of protecting the safety and health of our shared community, before adding additional infrastructure and jet capability at the Truax base.

Sincerely,

Members of the 2019 Madison Water Utility Board



To: Ramon Ortiz, 35A EIS Project Manager

From: City of Madison, WI. October 30, 2019
Sustainable Madison Committee Response to EIS

RE: FR#2018-02468

We, the members of the Sustainable Madison Committee, a committee that takes a leadership role in the promotion of sustainability for the City of Madison, the Madison community, and the region, hereby express concerns regarding details included in the recently released Draft United States Air Force F-35A Operational Beddown National Guard Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) pertaining to the 115 Fighter Wing at Truax Airfield.

Specifically, we note the EIS predicts that upon the basing of the F-35s, the annual Truax airfield CO₂ emissions would increase by approximately 12,478 tons or 135 percent versus that which is currently emitted by the F-16 squadron, and that this is equivalent to adding an additional 2,438 passenger vehicles onto our city's roads, driving 11,500 miles per year on average.

Further, because the use of afterburners may be more frequent than accounted for in the draft EIS, the estimated amount of CO₂ emissions may in reality be much higher than the calculated amount. According to a USAF memo obtained by the *Isthmus* newspaper, it is very likely that, in practice, F-35 pilots are likely to use their afterburners up to 50% of the time (<https://isthmus.com/news/news/f-35s-could-use-afterburners-more-frequently-than-air-national-guard-promises/>). The draft EIS uses an estimate of up to 5 percent afterburner use, which is potentially 45 percent lower than actual use.

Please note, the Sustainable Madison Committee helped craft legislation passed by Madison's Common Council in 2017 committing our city to 100% renewable energy and net zero carbon emissions. As Truax is located within the city, the stationing of F-35s, which the draft EIS states will burn more CO₂ than the currently-stationed F-16s, counteracts the work that the city is doing to achieve these goals.

As city residents, we take seriously the reality of our climate crisis and the health impacts of air pollution. We further believe all levels of government must commit to

reducing carbon emissions and thereby embrace a sustainable path ensuring the planet's livability for future generations.

Moreover, we are concerned that the F-35 Environmental Impact Statement is lacking in providing a comprehensive assessment on the environmental health impacts to our ecosystem and our community, including serious health risks associated with air and noise pollution, including: poor quality sleep, negative impacts on mood and mental health, decreased school performance, and increases in stress hormones, blood pressure, inflammation, and heart disease. The associated social and economic costs to our community are immense. The environmental impact study acknowledges there will be "significant disproportionate impacts to low-income and minority populations as well as children." Many families who live in the affected area are already burdened by racial inequities, such as poverty, which severely limits their capacity to move and often forces families to rely on open windows for cooling. Some of the lowest income communities affected by this decision may not qualify for mitigation.

The draft EIS does not address one environmental issue that has become quite important to our community. For many years the ANG has used fire-fighting foam containing PFAS chemicals at Truax airport to extinguish fires and in training exercises. These chemicals have been found at very high levels in groundwater at the airport and in Starkweather Creek, which receives waters draining from the airport. The Madison Water utility has stopped utilizing water from one municipal well found to contain levels of PFAs at 9.4 to 12 ppt. The WI Department of Health Services has recommended a groundwater standard for PFOA and PFOS of 20 ppt (<https://www.cityofmadison.com/water/water-quality/water-quality-testing/perfluorinated-compounds>). While these foams may soon be replaced by other fire-fighting materials, we ask that you include impact analysis for past and future PFAs use and expected replacements at the airport in the final EIS.

We respectfully ask the Air Force to issue a revised EIS clarifying the impacts the basing of the F-35s would have on our city's health and carbon load, specifically addressing means by which these environmental health burdens may be reduced.

Finally, if there are no means for effectively reducing these environmental health burdens, we respectfully oppose the Air Force basing of the F-35s at Truax.