

KEY MESSAGES

Message #1: The VT Air Guard does not need (and never needed) the F-35 to continue its flying mission

Facts:

- Senior officers of the Vermont Air National Guard have been saying they need the F-35 to continue to have a mission.
- The United States Air Force stated in their official environmental report that the VT Air National Guard did not need the F-35 to continue to have a flying mission.
- The Secretary of the Air Force later testified in federal court reiterating this.
- Federal District Judge Crawford ruled the F-35 was not needed for the Vermont Air Guard to continue its flying mission.

Documentation supporting the facts:

1. The Air Force stated in the EIS:

“Therefore, if there is no F-35A operational beddown at Burlington AGS the current mission would continue.” (*page PA-47*)

“At each alternative location, there are on-going and currently planned activities and programs that would continue, whether or not the location is chosen for the beddown of the F-35A operational aircraft.” (*page 2-29*)

- *F-35A Operational Basing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Sept 2013*

2. The Air Force stated in court documents:

“... that it expected Burlington to continue to fly military aircraft if it was not selected to host the F-35A.”

“...not replacing the Burlington’s F-16’s with F-35s means that at some point in the future, something else will happen. We just don’t know yet what it is.”

“Many F-16s are being retrofitted to extend their service life... Had the Air Force not decided to base the F-35s at Burlington, the present F-16s could well have been replaced with other F-16s.”

“...had the F-35A not been selected to replace the F-16s, there could have been ‘any number’ of reasonable alternatives available to the Air Force on how to configure Burlington.”

- *Federal court records (Civil Action No. 5:14-cv-132, Defendant’s Memorandum in Opposition to Plaintiffs’ Motion), March 7, 2016, page 59-60*

“...Plaintiff’s take one record fact—that the F-16s currently assigned to Burlington are approaching the end of their productive lifespan—and leap to the conclusion that absent the F-35A, Burlington would have been left with empty hangers.”

“...and as should be self-evident, the scheduled retirement of the F-16 aircraft currently stationed at Burlington does not inevitably lead to ‘empty hangers at Burlington’. Burlington’s history proves that. Through the years particular aircraft have come and gone, but the military mission has remained. (...eight different airframes flown by the VTANG over its 70 year history.)”

“The ROD (Record of Decision) did note that the F-16s presently at Burlington are scheduled to retire, but nothing in the ROD suggests the Air Force expected the retirement of those aircraft to leave Burlington’s hangers empty. To the contrary, the Air Force informed the public that if Burlington was not selected, the base’s ‘current mission would continue’.”

- *Federal court records (Civil Action No. 5:14-cv-132, Defendant’s Reply Memorandum), May 13, 2016, pages 21-22*

3. U.S. District Court Judge, Geoffrey Crawford, in his August 2016 ruling stated:

“The EIS is drafted from the perspective that military jets of some description will continue to be flown by VANG and that there is no reason to believe the base will be closed and the squadron disbanded even if the F-35 aircraft are based elsewhere.” (*page 27*)

“The Air Force has stated its commitment to fighter operations in Burlington even if the F-35 is based elsewhere.” (*page 27*)

“...there is no evidence of a plan to close the base or to use it for purposes other than flying aircraft.” (*page 28*)

“...there is no indication in the record that Defendant has decided to close the VANG base if the F-35 does not arrive. The record shows the opposite. Fighter planes of one description or another will continue to be based at VANG.” (*page 34*)

- *Federal court records (Case No. 5:14-cv-132, Decision on Cross-Motions for Summary Judgement), August 10, 2016*

Potential Questions

INTRO: Given that the United States Air Force...under oath... unequivocally stated that the Vermont Air National Guard does not need the F-35 to continue a flying mission in Vermont

Question: Why do you continue to repeat false information—saying it is needed?

Question: Why do you support bringing the F-35 here when it is not needed and causes harm?

Question: Why does the Guard leadership continue to contradict the Air Force?

Question: Why do you not challenge the Guard on its false statements?

Message #2: F-35 will negatively impact us in many ways. It will physically harm the elderly. It will especially harm children both physically and cognitively.

Facts: The F-35 will have negative impacts on the communities located in its noise zone. The noise and its safety record could seriously affect the over 6,600 people, including approximately 1,500 children, who live or work or attend school in the noise zone labeled by the federal government as being unsuitable for residential use.

Documentation Supporting the Facts:

1. The Air Force stated in the EIS:

“The 55 dB DNL contour will not be provided. While the USEPA recommends 55 dB DNL as the noise level which protects the public health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety (USEPA 1974), most people are regularly exposed to time-averaged noise levels exceeding 55 dB. The noise level 65 dB DNL had been selected as a threshold level above which the risk of substantial noise impacts increases.” (page NS-43)

“...evidence suggests that chronic exposure to high aircraft noise levels can impair learning.”

“...chronic exposure to aircraft noise resulted in reading deficits and impaired speech perception for first and second grade children.”

“It is generally accepted that young children are more susceptible than adults to the effects of background noise.”

“...studies suggest that loud and frequent background noise can affect the learning patterns of young children.”

“Children who were chronically exposed to aircraft noise from a new airport had modest (although significant) increases in blood pressure, significant increases in stress hormones, and a decline in quality of life.”

—*F-35A Operational Basing Environmental Impact Statement, May 2013, pages 28-30*

2. The Federal Government stated:

“A growing body of scientific knowledge demonstrates that children may suffer disproportionately from environmental health risks and safety risks.” These risks arise because: children’s neurological, immunological, digestive, and other bodily systems are still developing...children’s size and weight may diminish their protection from standard safety features..they are less able to protect themselves.”

- *Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks*

“Because their smaller ear canals magnify the sounds entering the ear canals, children’s hearing may be particularly sensitive. For example, a 20-decibel difference can exist between adult and infant ears.”

- *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency NEPA comments on F35 beddown at Eglin AFB, 2010*

3. The World Health Organization stated:

“There is sufficient evidence from large-scale epidemiological studies linking the population’s exposure to environmental noise with adverse health effects.” (*page xvii*)

“There is overwhelming evidence that exposure to environmental noise had adverse effects on the health of the population.” (*page 105*)

“It has been suspected for many years that children’s learning and memory are negatively affected by noise. Over 20 studies have shown negative effects of noise on reading and memory in children.” (*page 45*)

“Exposure during critical periods of learning at school could potentially impair development and have a lifelong effect on educational attainment.” (*page 45*)

“It would be realistic to assume that the impaired cognitive function will carry over to the years after the schooling period.” (*page 52*)

“...aircraft noise, because of its intensity, the location of the source, and its variability and unpredictability, is likely to have a greater effect on children’s reading than road traffic noise, which might be a more constant intensity.” (*page 51*)

- *Burden of disease from environmental noise, World Health Organization, 2011*

4. Cornell University environmental and developmental psychologist, Gary Evans, an expert in this field, and who —along with colleagues— has conducted numerous research studies examining the effects of the physical environment on children’s well-being found:

“Children’s reading abilities, cognitive development, physiological indicators, and motivational tasks are affected by exposure to noise.”

“Children exposed to chronic loud noise also experience a rise in blood pressure and stress hormones.”

“...significant reading delay are found for children living near airports, regardless of income.”

- *The Effects of the Physical Environment on Children’s Development, 2008*

5. FAA official stated during a meeting in Burlington:

“The FAA is studying the safety of the 65 DNL sound level at Chamberlin Elementary School. I think there’s a chance that number may change in the next few years.”

- *Richard Doucette, FAA Environmental Program Manager, February 2017*

Potential Questions:

INTRO: Given that the Air Force, the Environmental Protection Agency and the World Health Organization all state that noise levels similar to the F-35 noise can cause physical harm to people, especially children and the elderly,

Question: Why do you place a higher priority on a plane than on the people?

Question: How can you support bringing the F-35 into our lives?

Question: Why would you gamble on harming our children's health and learning ability

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**Message #3: We have lots of options. There are better aircraft choices for Burlington**

Facts:

- There are numerous alternative aircraft for the Vermont Air Guard to fly.
- Burlington Air Guard was considered for a tanker aircraft in 2012.
- Dozens of Air Guard units fly other types of military aircraft besides fighters.
- At least one other Air Guard base switched from fighter aircraft to transport aircraft.
- The Air Force needs more transport capabilities.

Documentation supporting the facts:

1. The Air Force stated in court documents "...had the F-35A not been selected to replace the F-16s, there could have been 'any number' of reasonable alternatives available to the Air Force on how to configure Burlington."

- *Federal court records (Civil Action No. 5:14-cv-132, Defendant's Memorandum in Opposition to Plaintiffs' Motion), March 7, 2016, page 60*

2. National Air Guard Stations in 24 other U. S. States fly transport aircraft. Eighteen units fly the C-130 transport aircraft.

- *"Base-by-base changes to aircraft and personnel" Air Force Times, Dec 31, 2012*

3. The Burlington Air Guard was on the list of bases being looked at to base the new KC-46A.

- *"Bases up to host Tanker" Air Force Times, May 28, 2012*

4. Recently other Air Guard bases have switched from fighter aircraft to other missions.

- The Great Falls Air Guard Base in Montana changed aircraft from F-15 fighter aircraft to C-130 transport aircraft in 2016.
  - *"120th Airlift Wing Prepares to Deploy" Jenn Rowell, Air Force Times, Oct 17, 2016*

- The New Mexico Air National Guard changed from a fighter mission to training aircrews in special operations and personnel recovery in 2013.
  - “150 Fighter Wing becomes 150th Special Operations Wing” NM National Guard Public Affairs, December 4, 2013

5. The Air Force reports that demand for mobility aircraft (transports, cargo and refueling aircraft) is increasing.

- “The demand for mobility aircraft, which includes transport aircraft, is trending upwards. Without it, a team doesn’t move.”
  - Deliver critical equipment and supplies to forces stateside and overseas
  - Transports deliver powerful humanitarian and diplomatic effects
  - During the 2017 hurricane season, transports delivered 28 million pounds of supplies to victims of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria
  - Transports delivered critical supplies and expertise to Mexico, Peru and Argentina
  - Air Force transports help others and enhance U. S. global reputation and build trust
  - Transport pilot skills are ideally and best suited to fly big body commercial airliners”
    - “Air Mobility: A clear need for future environments” Col Chris Karns, Air Force Times, January 29, 2018

Potential Questions

INTRO: Given that the AF said there are “any number of alternative aircraft” for the VT Guard to fly, and there are far better and quieter aircraft that the Guard could fly

Question: Why do you refuse to support a better aircraft for both the Guard and the people?

Question: Given that other Guard bases have switched to more community-compatible aircraft, why do you continue to support basing fighters-bombers in Vermont?

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Message #4: It’s not too late to stop the basing

Facts:

- Military missions and aircraft basing often change.
- Aircraft basing can be (and have been) cancelled or changed at any time — even after the official basing decision has been made and the Record of Decision (ROD) signed.
- Basing can be (and has been) changed even after the aircraft arrive at their locations.
 - This has occurred at Active Duty and Air Guard locations in other states.
- Senators, citizens, and legal actions have caused the military to change basing decisions.

- A single U.S. Senator* has stopped military basing decisions; e.g., Alaska, 2012.
- Legal actions have changed military basing decisions; e.g., Virginia, 2007 and Florida, 2010, 2014.
- Citizen activism has changed basing decisions; e.g., Virginia, 2007 and North Carolina, 2008.
- A quick online search found evidence that the Air Force and Navy changed basing decisions (sometimes multiple times) as a result of citizen opposition at Eglin AFB, FL, Oceana NAS, VA, Eielson AFB, Alaska, and Washington County, NC. Some of these citizen efforts led to lawsuits, others did not. Some led to Senatorial involvement. There are more examples.

Documentation supporting the facts:

1. Eglin AFB, FL F-35 basing decision was changed after a lawsuit was filed.

- F-35 flying operations were significantly reduced
- F-35 runway use was changed
- Some F-35s were re-assigned
- *“Valparaiso settle suit with F-35 noise concerns”* Meaghan O’Halloran, WJGH.com Mar 2, 2010
- *“Air Force to impose limits on F-35 training flights at Eglin”*. Dan Cohen, defensecommunications.org, July 9, 2014
- *Addendum to the 26 June 2014 Record of Decision, for the Final Supplemental EIS ROD F-35 Beddown at Eglin AFB, Fl, 23 April 2015*
- *“Up in the air: F-35 training program remains strong despite reduction in aircraft, students”* Kelly Humphrey, NWFdailynews.com, April 23, 2016

2. Oceana Naval Air Station, VA Navy plans to base the F-35 were cancelled when citizen opposition groups took action.

- *“F-35C not likely to be based at NAS Oceana, The Virginian, Dianna Cahn, 19 Nov 2013”*

3. Oceana Naval Air Station, VA F-18 flight operations were changed after homeowners objected.

- F-18 flights were reduced significantly
 - *“Jet noise can make you rich”* Defense Tech, 16 May 2007

4. Washington County, NC Navy plans to build an outlying landing field were cancelled after opposition from residents.

- *“Environmental Law Center to file suit challenging Navy’s OLF plan”* wrap.com, Jan 9, 2004
- *Hundreds drawn to celebrate ruling on OLF”* The Virginian Pilot, Kate Wiltrout, Mar 30, 2008

- “Notice of Intent to Terminate the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement” *Federal Register, Vol 73, No 69, Wednesday, April 9, 2008*

5. Air Force plans to move F-16s from Eielson AFB, AK to Joint Base Elmendorf, AK in June 2013 were stopped when Senator Mark Begich (D-AK) objected.

- “F-16 transfer debate highlights flaws in Senate’s decision-making” *Robert F. Dorr, Air Force Times, July 9, 2012, page 5*
- *Press Release, U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski, Alaska, March 1, 2013*

*Under Senate rules, one senator can block actions by the entire deliberative body. Senators use this to pressure the military to stop basing actions. Most often, Senators block approval of senior officer promotions until the military acquiesces to their demands.

- “F-16 transfer debate highlights flaws in Senate’s decision-making” *Robert F. Dorr, Air Force Times, July 9, 2012, page 5*

Potential Questions:

INTRO: Given that at other locations, after basing and/or flight operations decisions were made, the Air Force removed and/or changed F-35 flight operations in their areas

Question: Why do you continue to say nothing can be done here?

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**Message #5: F-35 noise cannot be mitigated, blocked, or stopped**

Facts: The noise of the F-35 cannot be effectively mitigated or blocked or stopped

Documentation Supporting the Facts:

1. The Air Force states in the EIS:

“The noise environment near the Burlington airfield is and would be dominated by military aircraft such that reducing the contribution of the civilian aircraft would have no effect on the overall noise level with regard to DNL.” *(page NS-37)*

“No other extra-ordinary mitigation measures are required beyond those prescribed under existing federal and state laws, regulations, and permit requirements to minimize, avoid, or reduce impacts.” *(page BR4-19)*

“Mitigation measures at Burlington International Airport include flight restrictions to minimize noise impacts to the adjacent community.... The F-35As would maintain the quiet hours, keep within the specified arrival and departure routes and procedures, as well as ensure that single F-35A flights are flown out of the airport as opposed to simultaneous (or formation) takeoffs.” *(page NS-31)*

- *F-35A Operational Basing Environmental Impact Statement*

2. The VT Air National Guard spokesperson, Col T. J. Jackman stated:

“We’re going to find ways to do the best we can to reduce the impact. The noise mitigation will be when the F-35 arrives with regard to how we fly the airplane.”

- *VTDigger, May 2, 2014*

3. The Vermont Air National Guard Mitigation and Management Plan states:

“...given the relative immaturity of the F-35 program, identification of new data and information relative to the F-35A may arise and it is possible that the impacts identified in the FEIS (Table 2-12) and the effectiveness of prescribed management and mitigation measures may be different from those expected.”

“Current mitigation measures and management actions in place for F-16 operations will continue as F-35A operations begin, and additional mitigation measures will be assessed and implemented before and after arrival of the new aircraft.”

- *F-35A Operational Basing Environmental Impact Statement Mitigation and Management Plan, 18 April 2014*

4. The Federal Aviation Administration stated:

“We have encouraged the airport to buy every home they can.”

“That’s the trouble with sound mitigation. Some people think it’s a panacea; it is not. The sound insulation does not work as soon as you open your windows.”<sup>99</sup>

- *Richard Doucette, FAA Environmental Program Manager, February 2017*

5. The Burlington Airport Noise Compatibility report states:

“...the Air National Guard is one of the dominate noise contributors to the DNL contours...”.  
(page 21)

“ Land acquisition and relocation is the only alternative that would eliminate the residential incompatibility.” (page 29)

“...noise barriers provide little, if any, reduction of noise from aircraft that are airborne and can be seen over the barrier.” (page 35)

“Also, soundproofing does not address the problem of noise levels outside the residence, meaning that yard and outside leisure activities, including those of children playing, would be impacted by unacceptably high levels of noise. Therefore, soundproofing is considered the least desirable alternative for addressing sound in residential dwellings.” (pg 46)

- *Burlington International airport 14 CFR Part 150 Update Noise Compatibility Program Update, April 2008*

Potential Questions:

INTRO: Given that the FAA and the Burlington Noise Compatibility Program report say the noise of military jets cannot be effectively blocked; and that the only recourse is to tear down the houses in the noise zone

Question: How can you support this level of dangerously unsafe noise in the middle of our cities....or so close to neighborhoods or cities?

Question: How do you justify the destruction of homes and neighborhoods for a military weapon system?

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Message #6: The F-35 is a very dangerous aircraft

Facts:

- The F-35 is a brand-new fifth generation aircraft.
- Never before has the Air Force based such a new aircraft at a Air Guard base in the middle of a heavily populated area.

Documentation Supporting the Facts:

1. The Air Force stated in the EIS:

“The F-35A is a new type of aircraft; historical trends show that mishaps rates of all types decrease the longer an aircraft is operational and as flight crews and maintenance personnel learn more about the aircraft’s capabilities and limitations...” (page ES-12)

“...used at civilian airports, Runway Protection Zones ...extend outwards from the ends of the active runways at commercial airports and delineate those areas recognized as having the greatest risk of aircraft mishaps (crashes), most of which occur during take-off or landing.” (page 3-26)

“...there have not been enough flight hours to accurately depict the specific safety record for this new aircraft.” (page 3-29)

“Burlington AGS, while having a shorter runway than the other alternative locations in this EIS, does meet the minimum length requirements for the F-35A.” (page PA-47)

- *F-35A Operational Basing Environmental Impact Statement*

2. The Air Force Research Laboratory stated:

“There has been a significant increase in the use of composite materials on Air Force aircraft. Advanced composite material use has increased with each new weapon system. Some aircraft should automatically be in the high-risk category due to the high percentage of large quantity of composite materi-

als within the airframe. For example, the B-2, F-22, AV-8B, and F-35 would be in this category.” (page 9)

“During an aircraft accident/mishap it is important to know that transformative processes take place and chemical byproducts are formed. The transformative process may create toxic materials that were not part of the original manufacture of the advanced composite.” (page 2)

“Aircraft crash sites have numerous potential hazards. The types of hazards vary depending on the type of aircraft.... If a fire was involved, more toxic substances will be created and released than a crash not involving a fire.....Potential contaminants/hazards include the following: jet fuel, unexploded ordnance, isocyanates, blood-borne pathogens, radioactive material, plastics, polymers composed of organic material, and composite fibers.... Potential exposure to the civilian population depends upon their proximity to the crash site....” (page 14)

“The long-term toxicological effects due to inhalation of micron-sized carbon fibers contaminated with adsorbed organic chemicals and byproducts generated in composite fires are largely unknown.” (page 13)

- *Composite Material Hazard Assessment at Crash Sites, January 2015*

Potential Questions:

INTRO: Given the lack of a reliable safety record for the F-35, the inherent dangers of having a short runway, and the dangers associated with the amount of military-grade advanced composite materials in its make-up, along with its toxic stealth coating

Question: How can you support such a dangerous military aircraft in the middle of a densely populated area?

Question: Why would you risk the lives of thousands for a plane?

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**Message #7: F-35 doesn't bring any jobs or help our economy**

Facts: The F-35 does not add any jobs to the Air Guard, nor does it affect the local economy

Documentation Supporting the Facts:

The Air Force stated in the EIS:

“...there would be no net change in the number of military personnel. Therefore, there would be no change to military payrolls or any subsequent impacts to regional employment or income...”. (page BR4-77)

“...under ANG Scenario 1 there would be no net change in the number of military personnel and that the increase in construction spending would result in additional demand for construction and secondary jobs.” (page SO-62)

Potential Questions:

INTRO: Given that the Air Force stated in their official report on the F-35 basing in Vermont that it will not add any jobs, nor will it affect our economy,

Question: Why do you say you support it because of jobs?

Question: Why do you continue to say you support the F-35 because of our economy?

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OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL INFORMATION

Noise levels and compatibility guidelines are defined by the Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise (FICUN) and adopted by the Department of Defense. (this is where the 65 decibel day-night-average level — dB DNL comes from) (page LU-22)

Noise difference between F-16 and F-35

“These data indicate that the F-35A would generate generally higher noise levels than the aircraft it is replacing.” (page NS-30)

“..the F-35A would be between 17dB and 20 dB greater in SEL and between 21dB and 25 dB greater in Lmax than the F-16 during takeoff and arrival, directly over the receiver at an altitude of 1,000 ft and at an altitude of 1,500 ft over the receiver on a downwind leg of a local pattern operation....A change in (single-event) sound level of 10 dB is usually perceived by the average person as a doubling (of halving) of the sound’s loudness.” (page NS-40)

Why no F-35s were brought to VT

The Air Force said they would not bring an F-35A to Burlington for residents to hear its noise because “There is not a sufficient number of F-35A aircraft available or enough trained pilots to provide a demonstration of the F-35A aircraft.” (page PI-50)

Regarding how basing decisions are made

“Environmental impacts are one of the many factors weighed by the decision maker. Other factors include, but are not limited to aircraft production, government budget constraints, national defense policy, and political considerations.” (page PI-54)

Regarding property values

“ Appendix C at Section C2.7 cites research that indicates a correlation between noise and a decrease in property values.” *(page SO-68)*

*Rosanne Greco, 2-11-2018*

12