

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 22, 2013

The Honorable Rand Beers
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Acting Secretary Beers,

We write to you today regarding the establishment of Homeland Security missions at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) located in Western New York.

We believe the Department's Missions of Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Coast Guard security, search and rescue, and research and development would be a perfect fit at NFARS. Previous studies by the Department have resulted in CBP identifying NFARS as a preferred site for a regional facility and we are interested in exploring potential solutions to the obstacles the Department faced in construction.

NFARS is home to the 914th Airlift Wing of the U.S. Air Force Reserve and the 107th Airlift Wing of the New York Air National Guard and offers the nation a base unparalleled in versatility and strategic importance. Currently, the base is involved in a variety of missions and serves as a significant source of employment and economic generation in Western New York.

Just north of Buffalo, New York, NFARS is strategically located in close proximity to Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, and the American-Canadian border. These barriers will allow DHS assets to accomplish border security as well as search and rescue missions and training at an already secure, established base. Currently, helicopters from Detroit are the closest response teams available for the Coast Guard to the area. Adding Coast Guard helicopters or other equipment to NFARS would address this issue and be an asset to the surrounding region.

Additionally, NFARS has ample space for DHS. A number of hangers that have been used to shelter helicopters and similar aircraft are available immediately. Over the years, the U.S. Coast Guard has stationed itinerant helicopters at the Base during the summer boating period to provide an augmentation for boater safety along the Niagara. NFARS also currently possesses open office space, has room for expansion, and includes a large parking ramp, refueling hydrants, a Crash, Fire & Rescue unit in a modern facility and control of a major taxiway capable of supporting any aircraft in the U.S. inventory. We believe the reuse of these existing facilities will save the Department significant funding and promote resourcefulness within the federal government.

We urge the Department to strongly consider NFARS for its next location in the Northeast. Western New York has a proud history and we thank the Department for continuing to develop and expand the capabilities of the strategic base in Niagara Falls. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



CHRIS COLLINS
Member of Congress



KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND
United States Senator



BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress



CHARLES E. SCHUMER
United States Senator