DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330

JUN 26 2012

HQ USAF/CC
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

The Honorable Mark Begich
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Begich:

Sir,

On June 22, 2012, the Secretary of Defense directed the Air Force "to suspend aircraft transfers and retirements previously scheduled for implementation in FY2012 with the expectation that Congress completes action on the FY 2013 defense authorization and appropriation bills prior to the end of the fiscal year . . . ." The Secretary recognized that both the House-passed and Senate Armed Services Committee-reported versions of the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act would reject or defer Air Force force structure adjustment proposals that encompass the relocation of the F-16s from Eielson Air Force Base to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. The FY 2013 Senate Armed Services Committee NDAA language also strongly urged the Air Force to suspend all force structure adjustments until October 1, 2013 and prohibit any expenditure of funds after October 1, 2012 to effect force structure changes so that the committee might review additional relevant information.

In compliance with the Secretary's intent, the Air Force will not take action on the proposal to relocate the F-16s from Eielson Air Force Base until Congress has completed action on the FY 2013 authorization and appropriations bills. If the bills, as enacted, prohibit the transfer of the F-16s from Eielson Air Force Base the Air Force will not execute the relocation.

Additionally, the Air Force recognizes the proposal to relocate the F-16s from Eielson Air Force Base to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson is subject to procedural compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) before any final decision is made; and completion of a formal housing study will help ensure adequate housing in the Anchorage community for transferring Airmen. The Air Force is committed to continual review of the proposal to relocate the F-16s from Eielson Air Force Base as more information becomes available. Once the housing study is complete and any final decision is made as part of the NEPA process, we are committed to sharing with the congressional delegation any new information or changes that may affect the affordability, feasibility, and executability of the Eielson Air Force Base proposal.

Sincerely,

NORTON A. SCHWARTZ
General, USAF
Chief of Staff