

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

June 7, 2023

Lt. Gen. Michael Loh
National Guard Bureau
1000 Air Force Pentagon
Room 4E126
Washington, DC 20330-1000

Dear Lieutenant General Loh,

We want to thank you for your continued support and visits to Minnesota and to the National Guard. We strongly support Minnesota's National Guard and the men and women who put their lives on the line to defend our country. There is strong bipartisan support to continue to ensure our brave servicemembers in Minnesota have the right resources and latest equipment, including aircraft, to succeed and carry out their missions. This support extends to the Minnesota National Guard's 133rd Airlift Wing and its long history of serving our state and country.

As the first federally recognized Air unit in the National Guard, the 133rd Airlift Wing is a historic unit with a history of accomplishment and partnership to be proud of. The 133rd is an integral part of our state, the overall National Guard and our country's security and as you look to finalize desired basing locations for the C-130J, we, the Minnesota Congressional Delegation, ask that you consider military judgment and include factors beyond the basing criteria.

The 133rd Airlift Wing has repeatedly met and exceeded expectations, distinguishing itself across various missions. The 133rd is mission proven and marked by operational accomplishment including:

- Being awarded the 2022 Curtis N. "Rusty" Metcalf Trophy which honors the most "Outstanding Airlift or Refueling Wing in the Air National Guard";
- Major Katie Lunning, who in 2023 became the first nurse in the Air National Guard to be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross;
- Flying 10% of all sorties to the National Capital Region in support of Operation CAPITOL RESPONSE, moving 10% of all personnel and material, more than any other unit across Active Duty, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve Corps;

The 133rd has served admirably and is always ready to support, participate in, or execute National Guard Bureau deployments, Long-Term Military Personnel Appropriation missions, Mission-Ready Airlift, and Joint Army/Air Tactical Training programs. The 133rd also leads the nation's longest continuous troop exchange with Norway, and our Croatia and Norway State Partnership Programs. All these partners benefit and embrace the 133rd's tactical airlift mission.

The Air National Guard augments an incredible fighting force in the United States Air Force and the 133rd plays a critical role in the overall readiness and effectiveness of the nation's air forces. The 133rd features airlift capability multipliers such as the low density/high-demand Contingency Response and Aeromedical Evacuation units that provide both critical warfighting and domestic operations capabilities. The 109th Aeromedical Evacuation squadron and 133rd Contingency Response team are both leaders across the Air Force and will undoubtedly magnify its capacity with recapitalization to the C-130J platform.


The Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area gives a strong strategic advantage to the mission of the 133rd and the National Guard Bureau. The Twin Cities provides the 133rd an excellent talent pool from which to recruit, including anchor higher education institutions with which to partner on initiatives important to both the 133rd and the state of Minnesota. The area also boasts a strong and vibrant innovation and technology base serving multiple industries, and one of the best airports in the nation which also serves as a major airline hub. Expertly utilizing this pool of resources the 133rd is unmatched in providing properly assigned, trained, and ready Airmen including:

- Consistently achieving top Fill Rates, masterfully training and assigning Airmen;
- Being one of three peer wings exceeding 97% end strength; quickly restoring above 100%;
- Currently and consistently achieving top rank in Medical Readiness maintaining a force that is 97% deployable.

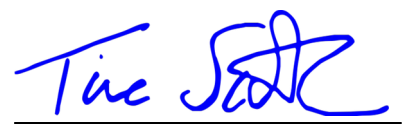
Beyond mission readiness, the Twin Cities area, the state of Minnesota, and the National Guard have established and maintain an excellent relationship that goes beyond the immediate mission of the Guard and the 133rd remains at the forefront of those partnerships. Programs like the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon network, Serving our Troops, and STARBASE work to engage with Minnesotans and our veteran network at all stages of life and experience.

The performance, readiness, capabilities, strength, and partnerships of the 133rd Airlift Wing are hard to match and provide a strong case to be one of the next states to recapitalize to C-130Js. We are proud of the 133rd and the Minnesota Guard and it is our privilege to work with and support them everyday. We are grateful for your openness to consider input on this fielding decision.


Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



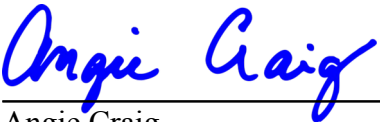
Brad Finstad
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



Michelle Fischbach
Member of Congress

CC: Mr. Frank Kendall III, Secretary of the Air Force