Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 25, 2013

The Honorable Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

General Mark A. Welsh
Chief of Staff
United States Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330

Dear Secretary Donley and General Welsh,

As the Air Force examines candidate bases for the initial fielding of the KC-46A, we want to express our strong support for the Ohio Air National Guard's 121st Air Refueling Wing based at Rickenbacker Air Guard Station (AGS). The proven performance of the unit, in combination with the location, infrastructure, and community associated with the site, would give this location unique benefit to the Air Force. We ask full consideration be given to Rickenbacker AGS as you move forward in selecting a primary and alternate site, and eventually making a final basing decision.

The men and women of the 121st Air Refueling Wing continue a lineage of proud service to our national defense spanning over seventy years. These Guardsmen stand ready to fulfill any mission assigned to them, and have a proven track record of exemplary performance in the air refueling mission. The Guardsmen have provided superior support to operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere around the world. Following the Libya no-fly zone UN resolution, the 121st was among the first units to respond within hours to rapidly developing tanker requirements.

The KC-135 crews at Rickenbacker AGS consistently demonstrate their superior performance as the only Air National Guard unit to compete in the biannual Air Mobility Command Rodeo, winning multiple awards over the past five years for Best KC-135 Aircrew, Air Refueling, and Cargo Loading across the Air Force.

Geographically, Rickenbacker AGS is well located to provide responsive support to the significant demand for aerial refueling in the eastern United States and in particular the heavy concentration of fighter and cargo aircraft in the southeast states.

Rickenbacker AGS is well-positioned to accept 12 KC-46A aircraft, with the base's infrastructure currently supporting 18 KC-135R aircraft. The local community is a strong supporter of the base and the resident Airmen. Additionally, the low local area costs and availability of community amenities make Rickenbacker AGS well-suited to host an active association unit.

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We believe that the proven performance and wealth of experience at the 121st, Rickenbacker's outstanding facilities, and the strong local and statewide support enjoyed by the unit make it an ideal location for a KC-46A Main Operating Base. We encourage you to give Rickenbacker AGS every consideration as you make your decision in the months ahead.

Thank you for your service to our nation and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Rob Portman
United States Senator

John A. Boehner
Member of Congress

Steve Stivers
Member of Congress

Patrick J. Tiberi
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Steve Chabot
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

Bob Latta
Member of Congress

Jim Jordan
Member of Congress

James Renacci
Member of Congress

Bill Johnson
Member of Congress

Bob Gibbs
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Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress

David Joyce
Member of Congress

Brad Wenstrup
Member of Congress