



January 14, 2009

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

Dear General Schwartz:

We are writing to express our strong support for the selection of Mountain Home Air Force Base as the nation's formal training unit for the Air Force's F-35s. The Idaho Delegation strongly supports the 366th Fighter Wing at Mountain Home Air Force Base, and we believe that it is an ideal training base for both operational and initial formal training of any and all of our next generation fighters.

Located ten miles away from the town of Mountain Home and isolated by the surrounding BLM and Idaho state lands, Mountain Home AFB faces no encroachment in the near or long-term future. The surrounding lands are used primarily for agricultural purposes, and there are no noise issues for the base. Elmore County has protected the future of the base against encroachment through its prudent planning and zoning. The base also has ample room to expand, with approximately 60 percent of its space currently unused. In addition, the City of Mountain Home has planned ahead for future growth by providing adequate infrastructure and water rights to provide the needed support and housing for additional growth or another wing to be added in the future. The County's Planning and Zoning Commission is currently working with developers on a planned community providing a capacity of 30,000 new homes, while the City of Boise is an easy commute for those looking to live in a more urban location.

As you know, the Mountain Home Range Complex is one of the top training areas in the Air Force. The complex is located within two minutes of takeoff and it has two ranges, Sailor Creek and Juniper Butte ranges, as well as several no-drop and electronic targets scattered under the Military Operation Area. In addition, the Utah Test and Training Range and Fallon Navy Range are within range if needed. The weather is ideal for training with four seasons and an average of 337 flying days a year.

General Schwartz, we believe that Mountain Home Air Force Base is the ideal location for the nation's F-35 training unit. We look forward to your timely consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

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United States Senator

James E. Risch
United States Senator

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Member of Congress

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