

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 14, 2023

The Honorable Frank Kendall
Secretary of the Air Force
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Kendall:

We were encouraged to learn that the final criteria for basing an Air National Guard (ANG) KC-46 mission is nearing completion. Thank you for your leadership on this and other critical basing decisions the Air Force is conducting. These actions and the processes by which these actions are made are important to us. As such, we request an update on the final selection criteria and timeline for the KC-46 basing decision.

Congress appreciates the complexity involved in basing the KC-46 aircraft. As opposed to previous decisions to locate the KC-46 platform at Altus Air Force Base, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, McConnell Air Force Base, Pease Air National Guard Base, and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, this will be the first time an eight-aircraft action is being considered for an ANG installation. With that in mind, we want to ensure the final approved criteria is suitable for the competing ANG locations. We recognize that the mission, encroachment issues, facilities, and cost capacity of basing eight aircraft are distinct from the requirements of basing 12 or 24 aircraft, but we also believe it is important to consider environment and personnel differences between active-duty locations and ANG locations. While we know each process is unique to the basing decision, it is important to establish appropriate criteria for this KC-46 ANG basing decision.

Key Field in Meridian, Mississippi, is a prime location for the KC-46. It has the ability to service refueling tracks quickly over the Gulf of Mexico with Air Force fighter fleets and other military branches. Key Field also has the infrastructure in place to immediately accept the KC-46 aircraft, ensuring efficiency and operational readiness for the Department. When called upon, Key Field and the State of Mississippi stand ready to support. We are also remain committed to supporting the Airmen and Guardians of the Department of the Air Force.

We look forward to the opportunity to meet with your staff as soon as possible to review the progress to date on the final criteria and the timeframe for a final basing decision.

Thank you for your consideration and prompt review of our request.

Sincerely,



Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator



Michael Guest
Member of Congress



Trent Kelly
Member of Congress



Mike Ezell
Member of Congress