

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 9, 2024

The Honorable Frank Kendall
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Kendall:

We are in receipt of the Congressional Notification for the final Air National Guard (ANG) KC-46, MOB 7 Basing Criteria. The Mississippi Congressional Delegation understands the Department of the Air Force's need for change in order to remain competitive in an era of Great Power Competition (GPC). Key Field in Meridian, Mississippi, is a prime location for the KC-46, and the 186th Air Refueling Wing stands ready to support the advancement of your efforts to reoptimize for GPC.

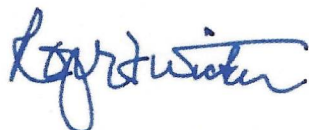
Meridian is a prime strategic location that fulfills the essential criteria for hosting this military asset. The region's proximity to international waters and its strategic location relative to military operations make it an excellent base for conducting refueling operations. The local workforce in Meridian has a strong tradition of supporting military operations, and the community has a long-standing history of providing exceptional support to the armed forces.

Key Field's existing infrastructure, including runways and maintenance facilities, is well-equipped to accommodate the KC-46, reducing the need for significant additional investment during these times of constrained resources. Additionally, Meridian's favorable weather conditions and access to ample airspace make it an optimal environment for conducting large-scale exercises and mission-focused training encompassing multiple operational plans to demonstrate and rehearse for complex, large-scale military operations—a main requirement to generate readiness which addresses the current force and the Department of the Air Force's ability to stay competitive. Selecting Meridian as the location for the new KC-46 would enhance the Air Force's operational capabilities.

In conclusion, Meridian, Mississippi, is the ideal location for hosting the new KC-46, offering strategic advantages, operational capabilities, and enduring community support. Our Congressional Delegation requests that you give full consideration to Meridian's proposal in the selection process for this critical military asset.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response on how we can support your efforts and are available to provide any additional information or insights to support the case for Meridian, Mississippi.

Sincerely,



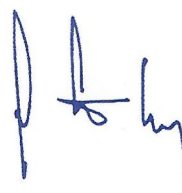
Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Trent Kelly
Member of Congress



Michael Guest
Member of Congress



Mike Ezell
Member of Congress