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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

May 15, 2018

The Honorable James N. Mattis
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Mattis,

As the Department of Defense prepares to release the Missile Defense Review, I write to reiterate my strong support for the selection of Fort Custer Training Center as the preferred location for a potential east coast missile defense site.

As you know, the Fiscal Year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act requires the Secretary of Defense to designate the preferred location of a potential Continental Interceptor Site (CIS) within 60 days of completing the review. The Missile Defense Agency has been studying a preferred location since 2013, completing environmental assessments of the three remaining locations under consideration back in 2016.

I have long supported missile defense. At times like these, with North Korea and Iran continuing to develop long-range missiles, it is imperative that we be prepared. That is precisely why, years ago, Congress included legislation supported by both Republican and Democrat Administrations to study the preferred location for a potential east coast CIS that would increase the capacity and battlespace of our existing Ground-based Midcourse Defense system.

After more than four years of study, it is clear that Fort Custer is an ideal location to support the mission of a third CIS. It is strategically located to provide superior coverage of the continental United States, and it can get there quickly, cost effectively, and with very little impact on the environment. Furthermore, Fort Custer has the leadership and community backing to support the long-term success of a potential CIS.

Positioned near two major interstate highways and a 10,000-foot runway, Fort Custer boasts the existing infrastructure needed to support construction and operation of the site. Its fields are shovel-ready and developing the CIS would not impact endangered species or habitats – ensuring environmentally sound, quick, and affordable construction. Fort Custer has made investments in renewable energy that offer additional cost-saving opportunities, including an operational solar field and wind funnel program.

Fort Custer also claims the leadership and strong public support needed to sustain the mission over the long-term. Operated by the Michigan National Guard and adjacent to the 110th Wing at the W.K. Kellogg Air National Guard Base, Fort Custer is the center of a community with a proud tradition of supporting our military and their families. From the start, community support

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for the CIS was overwhelming, with backing from elected officials, local businesses, economic development organizations, educational institutions, unions, and residents. Missile defense personnel would benefit from many programs and community initiatives already in place to support Fort Custer's soldiers and their families.

In conclusion, the decision is already years later than anticipated. It is time to get the ball rolling. My office stands ready to assist in any way we can.

Sincerely,



Fred Upton
Member of Congress



Thanks