

SPACE FLORIDA



November 30, 2022

The Honorable Frank Kendall Secretary
United States Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330

Dear Secretary Kendall,

The start of the space era launched from Florida ushered in a sonic boom of development and innovation in the United States. From the National Defense Act of 1958 that provided funding for education in mathematics, science, and engineering - to the Apollo missions, shuttle launches, and today's commercial space era and resurgence in the national space program - Florida is the hub for U.S. aerospace operations. It is the state where space history is made, national defense is a priority, and where top-tier educational institutions make their home in the most beautiful of locations.

Given the importance of Space Force's mission, it is essential that the Space Training and Readiness Command (STARCOM) headquarters and Space Delta 13 education and training facilities be based in a state that can provide the necessary resources to execute its mission, as well as support its Guardians and civilian staff and their families. That place is Florida.

Florida's aerospace and aviation workforce is more than 100,000 strong, with the skills and experience necessary to support STARCOM and Space Delta 13. And that is just *today's* workforce. With more than 40 colleges and universities, Florida also has an extraordinary talent pipeline that continues to grow. The proximity of Florida's colleges and universities—which include programs such as modeling and simulation—enable the Sunshine State to provide unique talent pipelines to STARCOM and Space Delta 13. Our strong commitment to the training and readiness of our military is underscored by the fact that the Air Force Agency for Modeling and Simulation (AFAMS), the U.S. Army Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation, and the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division (NAWCTSD) are all based in Central Florida. Additionally, Patrick SFB was the sole location considered for STARCOM Delta 10. It's clear that Florida is center for a large community and industry capability of education and training, modeling, simulation, gaming, and digital domain technology that are so essential to modern warfare training and will be key for the STARCOM mission.

Florida also has premiere transportation infrastructure, including roads, seaports, and airports, that can support the significant movement of people and equipment. More importantly, Patrick Space Force Base (PSFB) and Cape Canaveral Space Force Station (CSFS) have both existing and planned infrastructure with access to Space Florida's unique financial toolkit that eliminates military construction costs and reduces long-term operating costs. In fact, Space Florida has funded more than two million square feet of property on various federal installations statewide since 2010. This infrastructure will provide the perfect foundation for STARCOM to develop quickly and efficiently.

Florida is uniquely situated to support STARCOM's mission: "To prepare the United States Space Force to prevail in competition and conflict through innovative education, training, doctrine, and test."

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In Florida exists a space culture that extends beyond viewing the next launch to the stars amidst the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, one of the one of the world's most beautiful and diverse ecosystems. We prioritize aerospace education, workforce development, K-12 education (as evidenced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress ranking us third in the nation in Grade 4 reading and fourth in Grade 4 mathematics), and our natural resources, while intimately understanding that private sector investment and development are crucial to the success of our economy. Florida is a state that provides its military and civilian residents with a low cost of living, a high quality of life, world-class education options, and vibrant, beautiful communities. Florida offers members of the armed forces, civilian support staff, and their families a community to call home.

Sincerely,

Tom A. Wright
State Senator
Florida Senate, District 8

Thad Altman
Representative
Florida House of Representatives, District 32

Chip Diehl
Brig Gen, USAF (Ret)
Chairman, Florida Defense Support Task Force

Tom Neubauer
Vice Chairman, Florida Defense Support Task Force

Gregg Billman
Col, USAF, (Ret.)
Member, Florida Defense Support Task Force

The Honorable Thomas Bowman
Former Deputy Secretary, Dept. of Veterans Affairs
Col, USMC, (Ret.)
Member, Florida Defense Support Task Force

Stanley Bozin
RADM, USN, (Ret.)
Member, Florida Defense Support Task Force

Richard Haddad
Maj Gen, USAF, (Ret.)
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Kay Rasmussen
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