

# United States Congress

WASHINGTON, DC

February 26, 2024

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Senator Bill Nelson  
Administrator  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
300 E. Street SW  
Washington, DC 20546

General B. Chance Saltzman  
Chief of Space Operations  
U.S. Space Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-2000

Dear Secretary Austin, Administrator Nelson, and General Saltzman:

We write to encourage you to locate the U.S. Space Force's (USSF) Space Training and Readiness Command's (STARCOM) Space Delta 12 (Delta 12) mission at the Neil Armstrong Test Facility (ATF) part of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Glenn Research Center (GRC) in Sandusky, Ohio.

Ohio is a space state. Our state is integral to the history of flight, and because of our manufacturing prowess, federal assets, world-class research institutions, and skilled workforce, the future of aviation and space innovation will take place in Ohio. Delta 12 is responsible for testing and evaluating U.S. Space Force capabilities, and Ohio's robust space, defense, and aerospace infrastructure make our state the ideal permanent home of this critical mission. Specifically, ATF at the NASA Glenn Research Center is the ideal location for the STARCOM's Delta 12.

Delta 12's mission is to remain on the cutting edge of advancements in combat space systems and tactics. Its squadrons depend on access to operationally realistic environments, which requires a location with the highest caliber testing facilities to stay ahead of our adversaries and fulfill its mission. ATF has one-of-a-kind, world-class space simulation test facilities that will enhance U.S. national Security and the USSF's operational effectiveness – is the logical home for Delta 12. ATF's facilities can provide Delta 12 with the ability to conduct testing in hypersonics, in-space propulsion, space environment simulation, and electric aircraft testing. These testing facilities will enhance the capability of Delta 12 to meet the imminent national security needs in this quickly advancing frontier.

The Department of Defense (DoD) is already investing in NASA Glenn's Hypersonic Tunnel Facility (HTC) at ATF, which is crucial to the Department's capacity to develop large-scale hypersonic air-breathing propulsion systems. When complete, HTC will have the capacity to simulate hypersonic conditions at up to Mach 7. In addition, NASA Glenn's Space Environments Complex (SEC) houses the world's largest and most powerful space environment simulation facilities. The Space Simulation Vacuum Chamber is the world's largest space simulation vacuum, the Reverberant Acoustic Test Facility (RATF) is the world's most powerful spacecraft acoustic test chamber, and the Mechanical Vibration Facility (MVF) is the world's highest capacity and most powerful spacecraft shaker system. Additionally, ATF hosts the In-Space Propulsion Facility (ISP) which can conduct an altitude hot fire and is the world's only facility capable of testing full-scale upper-stage launch vehicles and rocket engines under simulated space conditions. Bringing Delta 12 to NASA Glenn would allow this mission to benefit from each of these one-of-a-kind assets.

The benefits of moving Delta 12 to Ohio extend beyond ATF's advanced facilities. Locating Delta 12 in Ohio will ensure Delta 12 can seamlessly collaborate with the National Space Intelligence Center (NSIC), or "Delta 18" – DOD's primary source for space intelligence and the Space Force's service intelligence center to "outwit, outreach, and win in the space domain." NSIC is headquartered with the National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC) at Wright Patterson Airforce Base (WPAFB) in Dayton, Ohio. WPAFB currently houses 683 Guardians – approximately 8 percent of the USSF military personnel. Connecting NSIC threat assessment and analysis capabilities with STARCOM's testing mission in the same region creates incredible synergy for verifying USSF space warfighting systems to meet, and defeat, adversarial systems. Co-locating these assets regionally will generate tremendous potential for cross functional collaboration that will greatly enhance its efficiency and effectiveness.

Of critical importance is the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), also located at WPAFB. AFRL is the primary scientific research and development center for the Department of the Air Force, playing an integral role in the discovery, development, and integration of warfighting technologies for our air, space, and cyberspace forces. AFRL provides a diverse portfolio of science and technology capabilities ranging from fundamental to advanced research and technology development.<sup>1</sup> ATF's proximity to AFRL is just another reason why Delta 12 should be located in Ohio.

WPAFB is host to other space-related military installations beyond NSIC, NASIC, and AFRL including the 76th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron (ISRS), and the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), the postgraduate institution and provider of professional and continuing education for the United States Armed Forces.

Moreover, at the 179th Cyberspace Wing, located at Mansfield Lahm Air National Guard Base in Mansfield, is the nation's first Air National Guard cyberspace wing, that will provide cyber-enabled capabilities supporting tactical needs in air and space superiority and information warfare, which will provide a competitive advantage in combat performance and survivability in joint force operations. In Springfield is the 178th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Group

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.afrl.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3279617/afrl-commander-highlights-2023-st-goals/>

at the Springfield Air National Guard Base to conduct intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and operations support to execute Federal and State missions. This synergy with the Intelligence Community (IC), DoD, and NASA make Ohio exceptional for additional USSF missions and Delta 12.

From the military missions at WPAFB and around Ohio and NASA Glenn Research Center's to our exceptional education programs, Ohio's public assets are ideally suited to enhance the effectiveness of any national security space endeavor.

Ohio is home to a skilled workforce with a direct pipeline from Ohio universities to Ohio jobs. The *CHIPS and Science Act* is fueling a high-tech manufacturing boom that is serving to solidify this pipeline. Ohio's engineers and scientists are skilled, educated, and eager to advance the forefronts of innovation. In addition to its talented and skilled workers, Ohio sits in a strategically ideal location near the heart of our country, making it the prime location for Delta 12.

The proximity of military and federal space-related missions in Ohio represents a unique opportunity to accelerate and grow the capabilities of the United States. The confluence of missions and technologies in Ohio is unmatched and must be considered as the Air Force and Space Force reorganize to meet the requirements of an evolving Great Power Competition. ATF is the most well-equipped and logical place to base Delta 12 long term. It's advanced testing facilities are crucial to fulfilling Delta 12's mission, and we urge you to locate Delta 12 at ATF in Sandusky, Ohio.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



JD Vance  
United State Senator



Marcy Kaptur  
United States Representative



Max Miller  
United States Representative



Shontel M. Brown  
United States Representative



Warren Davidson  
United States Representative



Joyce Beatty  
United States Representative



Robert E. Latta  
United States Representative



Greg Landsman  
United States Representative



Emilia Sykes  
United States Representative