

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2102

May 23, 2012

The Honorable General Harry M. Wyatt III  
Director  
Air National Guard  
1411 Jefferson Davis Highway  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear General Wyatt,

I share what was undoubtedly your feelings of pride and relief that yesterday two F-15 Air National Guard jets succeeded swiftly in addressing a potential terrorist threat on US Airways Flight 787.

As you know, thanks in large measure to the jets' strategic location at the 104th Fighter Wing at Barnes Air National Guard base in Westfield, Massachusetts our jets were able to respond quickly and effectively, much like the jets that were scrambled rapidly on September 11, 2001 in response to the attacks on the World Trade Center.

With this fresh reminder of the contributions made by the resources at Barnes, I'm writing to you today to request your assistance in maintaining Barnes as a critical defense and homeland security asset by repaving the aging airstrip.

As you know, the 104th Fighter Wing at Barnes shares a runway with Westfield Barnes Regional Airport. This co-operational relationship has been a good one that both benefits the Guard, and the regional economy of Westfield. However, the runway is over 27 years old and between use by commercial planes and the fighter jets, the runway is showing its age and its accompanying limits. Loose asphalt and craters dot the runway creating a potentially unsafe airstrip.

The Federal Aviation Administration has spent approximately \$1.2 million for several patches and temporary fixes to the runway used by commercial aircraft over the last several years but a more comprehensive repaving would be best. The runway is currently scheduled for rebuild and repairs in 2015 however the current state and conditions of the runway prompts consideration that its rebuild be moved to the earliest date feasible.

I have reached out to the Department of Transportation about accelerating their plans to repave the runway and the Secretary has expressed his willingness to work with your office and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on repaving the runway before 2015. I respectfully request that you consider the strategic importance of Barnes and provide funding to assist in the repaving.

I look forward to working with you and the Department of Transportation as we work to support Barnes and the men and women who serve there. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry

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