

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

June 11, 2012

The Honorable Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

General Norton A. Schwartz
Air Force Chief of Staff
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington DC, 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Donley and General Schwartz,

As you may recall, on April 26 of this year, members of our delegation wrote to you and respectfully asked you to reconsider the Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) reorganization as it applies to the Electronic Systems Center (ESC) at Hanscom Air Force Base (AFB), Massachusetts. Specifically, we requested that you retain Hanscom's 3-star billet, which would be lost under the AFMC reorganization plan. While we acknowledge and appreciate the need to restructure and realign the force to modernize and meet new threats, we take this opportunity to reiterate our shared view and inform you of recent congressional action that underscores our view that it is essential that the vital electronic systems and cyber acquisitions work conducted at Hanscom continue to be overseen by at least a Lieutenant General.

Since our previous communication, the House of Representatives has passed its version of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Included in the bill were a number of provisions which, in direct response to the announced AFMC reorganization, sought to retain the capabilities of several Air Force installations across the country, including Hanscom AFB. Section 2867, which was included by Representative Tsongas, requires the Secretary of the Air Force to retain the core functions of the ESC at Hanscom AFB, with the same integrated mission elements, responsibilities, and capabilities as existed as of November 1, 2011 until such time as they are modified pursuant to the section 10 U.S.C. 2687 (the Base Realignment and Closure statute) or a subsequent law providing for the closure or realignment of military installations in the United States.

Likewise, the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) included both bill and report language (included by Senator Scott Brown) in its version of the FY13 NDAA directing the Secretary of the Air Force to preserve current leadership rank structure and core functions at Hanscom AFB with the same integrated mission elements, responsibilities and capabilities as existed on November 1, 2011, until 180 days after the National Commission on Structure of the Air Force delivers its recommendations regarding the appropriate force structure mix (as required under section 1703 in the committee report) to the four congressional defense committees.

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We interpret these legislative developments as a unified bicameral declaration that ESC's mission is too valuable to understate the impact that downgrading Hanscom's leadership will have on our armed forces' ability to bring forth the most effective cyber tools and resources to meet national security needs. We therefore wish to reiterate our opposition to the downgrading of Hanscom AFB from a 3-star to a 2-star billet. At a minimum, we trust you will not move forward with any AFMC implementation plans, transfers or moves related to the ESC while the FY13 NDAA is still being debated and finalized.

As requested in our previous letter, we look forward to the opportunity to personally meet and discuss these vital matters at your earliest availability.

Thank you for your consideration and service to our nation.

Sincerely,

John J. Kerry

Edward J. Markey

John W. Ober

John F. Tierney
Steph S. Leggett

Scott P. Brown

Richard E. Blumenthal

Jim Moran

Michael E. Caporaso

Nikki Bonaguidi

William R. Keating