

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 18, 2016

The Honorable Ray Mabus  
Secretary of the Navy  
1000 Navy Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Admiral John Richardson  
Chief of Naval Operations  
2000 Navy Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20350-2000

Dear Secretary Mabus and Admiral Richardson,

We write in support of selecting Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia as the East Coast Forward Operating Base for MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft. We believe Wallops will provide an ideal home for these revolutionary aircraft and for the Sailors and families supporting them.

Located on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, Wallops is located less than 100 miles from the fleet concentration area in Hampton Roads. Naval aviation already has a well-established presence at Wallops, with E-2 and C-2 aircraft using Wallops on a routine basis for fleet carrier landing practice. Basing the first operational Tritons at Wallops would locate those aircraft in close proximity to NAS Patuxent River and Naval Air Systems Command, where the Triton was developed and tested. It would also place them in close proximity to the fleet at Naval Station Norfolk, the Master Jet Base at NAS Oceana, and the entire Virginia Capes operating area. We believe that basing Triton in close proximity to these other Navy facilities, headquarters, and operating forces will create synergies and facilitate the faster integration of Triton into the Navy's battle network. We also believe that Wallops' location provides a superior base of operations for conducting maritime surveillance missions throughout the entire Atlantic.

Wallops is an ideal site for basing unmanned aircraft, in particular. Despite its central location in the Mid-Atlantic, Wallops enjoys uncrowded airspace and its rural environs generate no encroachment issues. With two 8000-foot runways and the taxiways and apron space to support additional aircraft, Wallops is ready to accommodate Triton with minimal additional construction. In addition, it is already an established center of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) activity and home to a number of UAVs, including NASA's RQ-4 Global Hawks, an aircraft very similar to Triton. Unlike at many other locations, UAVs are a familiar sight in Wallops' airspace. Air traffic controllers in the region are familiar and comfortable with UAVs, including the Triton, stemming from its development period at nearby Patuxent River. Compared to other locations being considered, Wallops is also less adversely impacted by severe weather and flooding, and enjoys lower costs for housing, living, and construction.

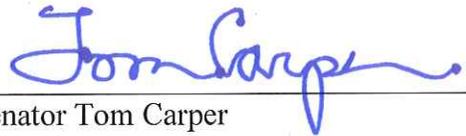
Last but not least, Wallops and other Navy, Department of Defense, and Federal facilities in Virginia benefit from the strong support of the communities of which they are a part. As those communities' representatives in the House and Senate, we pledge to fully support an expanded Navy mission at Wallops.

We look forward to further discussing this matter with you, and providing whatever support the basing selection process may require.

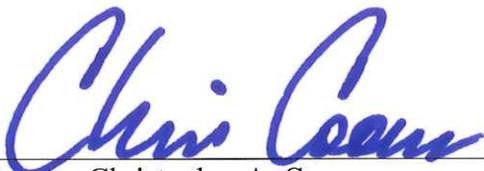
Sincerely,



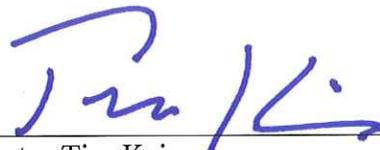
Senator Benjamin L. Cardin



Senator Tom Carper



Senator Christopher A. Coons



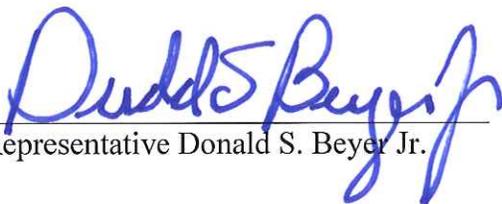
Senator Tim Kaine



Senator Barbara A. Mikulski



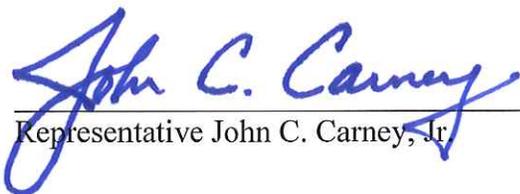
Senator Mark R. Warner



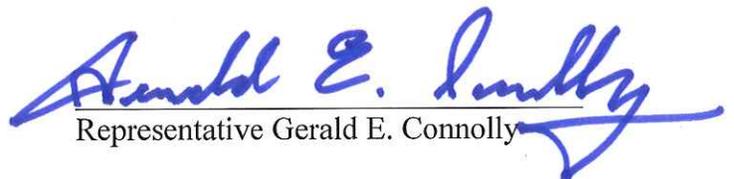
Representative Donald S. Beyer, Jr.



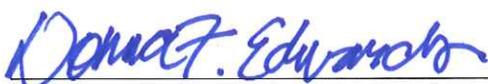
Representative Barbara Comstock



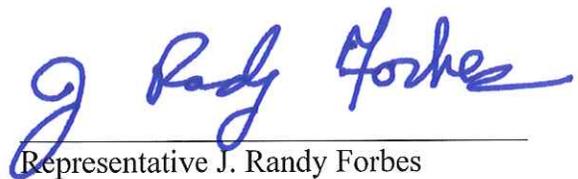
Representative John C. Carney, Jr.



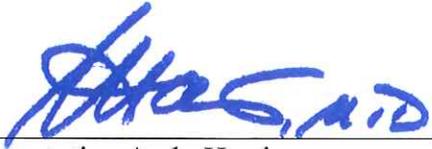
Representative Gerald E. Connolly



Representative Donna Edwards



Representative J. Randy Forbes



Representative Andy Harris



Representative Scott Rigell



Representative C.A. Dutch Ruppertsberger



Representative Robert C. "Bobby" Scott



Representative Chris Van Hollen



Representative Robert J. Wittman