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June 6, 2012

The Honorable Kathleen I. Ferguson  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of the  
Air Force for Installations  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 2033

The Honorable Katherine Hammack  
Assistant Secretary of the Army for  
Installations, Energy, and Environment  
110 Army Pentagon, Room 3E464  
Washington, DC 20330

Ms. Ferguson and Ms. Hammack:

As you know, under the recent proposal by Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley, the Air Force hopes to reposition assets from Eielson Air Force Base to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER). If approved, the movement would involve the relocation of 623 active duty military personnel from Eielson Air Force Base during Fiscal Year 2013.

In addition to serious concerns I have about whether this plan should go forward, I am concerned that these airmen would be financially burdened by this move. Historically, the Housing Assistance Program (HAP) was available to assist in scenarios similar to this. This program was specifically referred to by General Schwartz during a meeting with me on May 21<sup>st</sup> as an option for airmen to salvage potentially catastrophic scenarios created by the requirement to sell their house in a flooded market where property values have plummeted.

As I understand it, the program is authorized under Title 10, Section 2832 and more specifically Section 1013 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966, as amended. The law provides some monetary relief to eligible service members and federal employee homeowners who suffer financial loss on the sale of their primary residences when a base closure or realignment announcement causes a decline in the residential real estate market and they are not able to sell their homes under reasonable terms or conditions.

For airmen to take advantage of this program, there are specific requirements. There must be an announcement of a base closing or realignment action which affects their community. Also, a determination must be made that the real estate values have dropped as a direct result of the base closing or realignment announcement. This assessment must be completed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

A recent visible use of this program was during the Base Realignment and Closure round during 2005. The program has not been authorized for any realignments since that time. Moreover, despite General Schwartz's recent reference to the program, I understand the Air

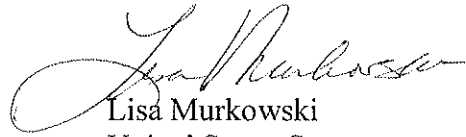
Force has not begun any of the required steps to begin the process for authorizing this program. My staff raised this issue during the Site Activation Task Force brief that occurred on May 31<sup>st</sup>.

Because of omission of this important consideration in the Air Force's proposal, I would appreciate answers to the following questions as soon as possible:

- What is the future plan for Eielson Air Force Base?
- Is there a plan to authorize HAP for airmen affected by the current realignment proposal should it occur?
- Within the fund that supports the HAP, how much money is currently available?
- How much additional funding would be needed for realignment from Eielson to JBER as proposed by the Air Force?
- Will the program be available to those airmen who will be displaced during the proposed Fiscal Year 2015 round of moves from Eielson AFB to JBER?

Thank you for your time and attention to these questions. Should you have any questions, please contact Captain Chris Bala at (202) 224-3619.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator

cc: Senator Levin, Chairman, Senate Armed Services Committee  
Senator McCain, Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee  
Senator Inouye, Chairman, Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
Senator Cochran, Ranking Member, Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
Senator Johnson, Chairman, Senate MILCON Appropriations Subcommittee  
Senator Kirk, Ranking Member, Senate MILCON Appropriations Subcommittee