



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

ANDREW M. CUOMO
GOVERNOR

October 27, 2015

The Honorable Deborah Lee James
Secretary of the Air Force
U.S. Department of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

Dear Secretary James:

I write to reiterate the State's commitment to supporting the United States Air Force (USAF) assets within the State, and specifically the 914th Airlift Wing of the Air Force Reserve in Niagara Falls. From its initial activation, the 914th Reserve Wing has always flown a mobility mission. It currently flies eight C-130s, but the unit's H2-model planes are not currently equipped to operate within the U.S. and European airspaces beyond 2019.

As USAF decreases the role for intra-theater cargo lift, another mobility mission – mid-air refueling performed by tanker-equipped units – becomes more critical to assuring success for all USAF objectives. The State of New York supported, fought for and lost selection of the 914th as the third main operating base for the Air Force's new KC-46 Pegasus tanker. As NFARS previously supported the KC-135 when the 107th Refueling Wing of the Air National Guard flew the tanker mission for more than a decade, I encourage USAF to examine a return of that capability to the base.

The Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) is the largest single-site employer in Niagara County and has an annual economic impact of more than \$140 million. The State of New York has consistently supported the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard units at the base regardless of their missions. Throughout history, NFARS has been the home of various models of C-130 cargo aircraft, the developmental X-1 fighter, the KC-135 Stratotanker and, most recently, the MQ-9 Reaper RPA.

In June, my office joined Niagara community leaders in meetings with Air Force leaders at the Pentagon, and, in September, our newest team member retired General Howie Chandler, accompanied community leaders to the headquarters of Air Mobility Command. At those meetings, we were told by USAF that NFARS is capable of supporting tankers. I assure you, New York and our Congressional delegation stand united to support of USAF. Specifically, the

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State is prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to mitigate costs associated with any decision that results in an enduring mission for the Reserve Wing at NFARS.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continuing the partnership between the State of New York and the Air Force, for the betterment of all our USAF facilities, service members and their families, and communities at large.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew M. Cuomo', written in a cursive style.

ANDREW M. CUOMO

cc: Lieutenant General James "JJ" Jackson
Chief of the Air Force Reserve

General Carlton Everhart
Commander, Air Mobility Command