

Letter also sent to:
Senator Mel Martinez
Congressman Jeff Miller

FRESH AND SALTWATER SPORTS
ON CHOCTAWHATCHEE BAY

CITY OF VALPARAISO
465 VALPARAISO PARKWAY • (850) 729-5402
VALPARAISO, FLORIDA 32580

October 23, 2008

Honorable Bill Nelson
United States Senate
716 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nelson,

**REF: YOUR CONGRESSIONAL LETTER OF 25 SEPTEMBER 2008 TO
MR. KEVIN W. BILLINGS SAF/IE**

We appreciate your proactive support to expedite the Eglin BRAC to bed down the F-35 JSF IJTS and the 7SFG at Eglin. It is also reassuring that you are aware of the many challenges we face to integrate the new missions, both on and off base, which will require civilian and military cooperation to resolve.

We have received the final Eglin BRAC EIS and are extremely concerned as it is essentially a regurgitation of the interim report. It does however recommend means for reducing the high noise levels for Valparaiso but these are not quantified, thus their effectiveness cannot be evaluated. These suggestions are not mandatory actions for the Air Force and it is unknown if followed that the noise abatement would be sufficient to alleviate our concerns.

For the JSF flight training Alternative 1, the report recommends structural improvements to all dwellings in the 65 to 74 dB DNL zones with federal funding and the purchase of properties within the above 75 dB DNL noise area if owners are willing to sell. Areas requiring structural improvements comprise 57% of the city. The above 75dB DNL noise area contours cover 35% of the city. If Alternative 2 is implemented the city will be more negatively impacted.

Without significant mitigation efforts to reduce the projected noise contours over our city, our future viability is in jeopardy. It should also be noted that the federal government presently owns 87% of the incorporated land in Valparaiso.

"Home of the World's Largest Air Force Installation, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida"

If the Record of Decision (ROD) implements the final EIS the City of Valparaiso will require at a minimum funding for the following:

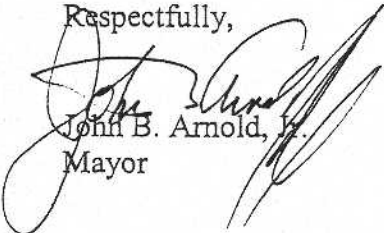
- (a) An engineering study and to determine magnitude and costing of structural improvements to all dwellings in the 65 to 74 dB DNL zones and funding for implementation.
- (b) A municipal planning to study and recommended future land use for the entire city with the constraints imposed.
- (c) A financial analysis to determine the viability of the city to meet existing bond requirements and the ability to provide adequate municipal services due to ad valorem tax revenue losses due to devaluated properties, mandatory land rezoning (added restrictions), and federally acquired properties.
- (d) Future unresolved issues as they develop.

Additionally the city would like to know if the Air force will acquire the residences in the newly designated crash zone (CZ) and if so when?

On behalf of our residents I request your assistance to acquire the support enumerated above.

From day one all Valparaiso ever asked for both formally and informally was the ability and opportunity to "sit down" with Air Force decision maker to discuss noise abatement possibilities. To date we have been ignored. We recognize this is an Air Force responsibility but believe we may have had valuable inputs.

Respectfully,


John B. Arnold, Jr.
Mayor

Cc: SAF/IE Kevin W. Billings

Encl: Congressional letter of 25 September 2008

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 25, 2008

Mr. Kevin W. Billings
SAF/IE
1160 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330-1160

Dear Mr. Billings,

We fully support the Base Realignment and Base Closure (BRAC) decision, codified in law, for bed down of the F-35 Joint Integrated Training Center and the 7th Special Forces Group (SFG) at Eglin AFB. As with prior BRAC decisions, however, we anticipate that the costs for effective implementation will exceed BRAC budgets. With the F-35 in its first months of development testing, we also realize there will be significant discoveries during the aircraft's multi-year test program associated with its operational characteristics and training program needs. This includes such topics as noise characteristics and adverse temperature impacts on taxiway and runway surfaces.

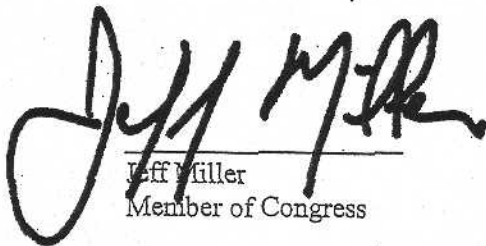
Based upon our analysis of the draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) report combined with knowledge of public feedback, it is clear the Air Force faces major challenges for compatible integration of the new missions. This includes compatibility issues with existing military operations and, environmentally, with work and living areas on and off base.

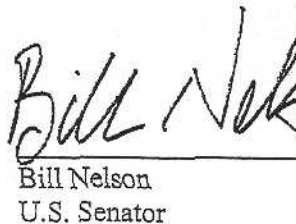
Even with appropriate due diligence, the Air Force may not be able to unilaterally mitigate all impacts of the new missions. Significant actions may be needed at the local, state, and federal government levels to effect solutions. Thus, it is imperative that release of the final EIS and Record of Decisions (RODs) be accomplished as soon as possible. The continued delay of the final EIS is of great concern to us.

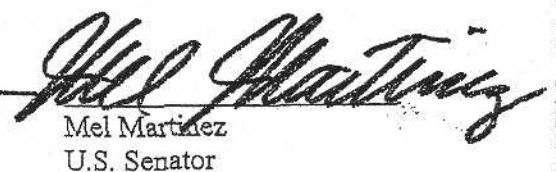
We request your assurance that current EIS and ROD schedule delays will not jeopardize funding for bed down of the Joint Strike Fighter and the 7th Special Forces Group at Eglin AFB, and, request the release date for the final EIS.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


Jeff Miller
Member of Congress


Bill Nelson
U.S. Senator


Mel Martinez
U.S. Senator