

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2009

Lieutenant General Clyde A. Vaughn
Director, Army National Guard
NGB-ARZ
111 South George Mason Drive
Arlington, Virginia 22204-1382

Dear General Vaughn:

As you know, unit training for Tactical Unmanned Aircraft Systems (TUAS) crew proficiency is a critical national defense and homeland security priority. Recent studies show that active and reserve units lack adequate access to sufficient training areas and facilities. We endorse the National Guard Bureau's recent efforts to conduct on-site visits to select the best possible regional flight training facilities and strongly encourage you to select the Yakima Training Center (YTC).

The YTC, located near Yakima, Washington, is one of the largest integrated ground/air maneuver areas under restricted airspace within the Continental United States. YTC provides a centrally located TUAS training facility for western states. In addition, the YTC location supports all TUAS crew training needs for federal "go-to-war" missions, domestic Homeland Defense/Homeland Security missions, and counter-drug operations.

The Yakima Training Center is also close to the largest west coast active Army installation; Ft. Lewis. Active duty Army units at Ft. Lewis and the Washington National Guard's 81st Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT) are TUAS-equipped and require effective, affordable training site access. Furthermore, Department of Homeland Security border units such as the Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Branch, located in Bellingham, Washington, will be TUAS equipped, and will also benefit from the close proximity to the Yakima Training Center site.

There will clearly be new resource infrastructure needs and we pledge our support and assistance in meeting these requirements. We urge you to designate the Yakima Training Center as the National Guard Bureau's Regional Flight Training Center for the western United States and encourage the Army National Guard to confirm this designation.

Sincerely,

		
_____ Patty Murray United States Senator	_____ Maria Cantwell United States Senator	_____ Doc Hastings Member of Congress



Norm Dicks
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress