

March 29th, 2022

Senate Chair Lang, House Chair Ecklund, Members of the Senate and House Veteran's Affairs Committees,

The Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce and its Military Affairs Committee is writing today in support of SF4261 and HF4484, which request funding for the removal of decades-old, single-bay aircraft shelters and the construction of new universal aircraft shelters for use at the 148th Fighter Wing's Duluth Air National Guard Base. The Duluth Chamber is committed to advocating for the 148th Fighter Wing in order to retain the base as the employer and economic driver of our community that it is today. Funding for modern infrastructure, provided for by these bills, will position the 148th Fighter Wing for future missions and a continued presence in Duluth.

The Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce is one of the state's largest chambers, serving over 1,000 members. The Chamber's footprint in Northeastern Minnesota also allows it to be an influential regional chamber advocating for regional investments and policies that will benefit the economies, businesses, and communities that surround us.

The Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee (MAC) promotes and supports the economic impacts of local branches of the military including the 148th Fighter Wing's Duluth Air National Guard Base. The MAC recognizes the significant contribution of the 148th Fighter Wing to our region's economic health and welfare. In fact, the annual economic impact of the 148th Fighter Wing is \$96 million. Further, the Fighter Wing employs 470 full-time personnel and over 1,100 total personnel. Consequently, many of the Fighter Wing's personnel have significant others and families that contribute immense value to our region's economies and communities.

Investment into the 148th Fighter Wing's Duluth Air National Guard Base would demonstrate the State of Minnesota's commitment to supporting the men and women of the 148th Fighter Wing and ensuring the Wing's continued economic value to Northeastern Minnesota. Additionally, this investment would demonstrate support of the future missions of the Fighter Wing, which are critical to our collective safety, national security and the public health of our communities, region, state, and country.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Jennifer J. Cady, MA
Military Affairs Committee, Chair
Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce

Matthew R. Baumgartner, MBA
President
Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce