



MEMORANDUM

AGENDA ITEM #V.D

DATE: JUNE 16, 2023

TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: STAFF

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION 23-01 HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE

In late 2022, the South Florida Defense Alliance (SFDA) became aware that there was a risk of the U.S. Air Force (USAF) potentially beginning accelerated budget and force reductions at the 482nd Fighter Wing based at Homestead Air Reserve Base (HARB).

- Existing Block 30 F16s at the 482nd Fighter Wing have service life remaining to reach the end of this decade when in the ~FY30 timeframe, the next available basing decision for replacement F35 aircraft available to the Air Force Reserve Command is expected to occur.
- Due to budget constraints, indications were the USAF would accelerate reduction of the F16 inventory, personnel and funding in the FY 25-26 timeframe. No replacement aircraft or missions were being indicated.

Although there was no overt statement of intent to close HARB, accelerating the F16 retirements on this timeframe would essentially leave HARB as an empty airbase with no Air Force aviation mission for multiple years. In the anticipated budget environment, this outcome makes HARB a likely target for base closure in the later '20s timeframe.

In Dec 2022 – Jan 2023, the SFDA alerted various Miami-Dade County officials to the situation and partnered with the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) and their Military Affairs Committee (MAC) to apply for a state grant from the Florida Defense Support Task Force (FDSTF) to provide support in Washington DC to advocate for mission sustainment and expansion at HARB. This engagement has rallied support across multiple South Florida organizations and communities. Engagement is ongoing with members of Congress and Air Force officials.



Current indications are that the Air Force has restored funding for HARB and the 482nd Fighter Wing in their draft FY25 budget, but reductions in FY26 and beyond are still at a high level of risk. To date, there is no stated commitment or identified plan by the Air Force for replacement aircraft at HARB regardless of when the F16s are retired.

Vigilance and engagement by the South Florida community over the next several federal budget cycles is critical. HARB provides many benefits:

- Key strategic location for the U.S.
- Support to not only the USAF, but many tenant commands and other supporting activities.
- Serves as the main economic engine in deep south Miami-Dade County.

It is vital that the South Florida region present a united and resolute front to federal officials about the importance to South Florida of sustaining viable aviation, national security, and regional support through the Homestead Air Reserve Base.

Recommendation: Adopt Resolution 23-01



RESOLUTION 23-01

RESOLUTION URGING THE U.S. CONGRESS, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, AND FLORIDA STATE OFFICIALS TO SUPPORT RETENTION AND INCREASED MILITARY, HOMELAND SECURITY, INTERAGENCY, AND NATIONAL GUARD USE OF HOMESTEAD AIR RESERVE BASE; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the South Florida Regional Planning Council (Council) supports a robust and diversified South Florida economy of which the military sector is an integral part; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for South Florida identifies a diversified economy as a mark of resilience for competitiveness and identifies Defense as a key contributor to South Florida's economy; and

WHEREAS, the Council supports the critical mission of military installations in South Florida that ensure the safety and security of our stakeholder communities and the United States; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Air Force and Air Force Reserve Command operates Homestead Air Reserve Base as the home of the 482nd Fighter Wing currently utilizing Block 30 F-16 aircraft ready to support combatant command missions around the globe; and

WHEREAS, Homestead Air Reserve Base is ideally positioned near multiple training ranges, associated airspace, and in an environment with favorable year-round weather conditions supporting military aviation training and readiness for mission assurance; and

WHEREAS, Homestead Air Reserve Base was evaluated in an Environmental Impact Study to support F35 basing and was compared favorably to other potential sites in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Homestead Air Reserve Base is the southernmost air base in the continental U.S. with a large runway, and, as such, is strategically located with the shortest air distances to the Caribbean, Central/South America, and Africa; and

WHEREAS, Homestead Air Reserve Base is also ideally located for air defense missions for the Southern U.S.; and

WHEREAS, Homestead Air Reserve Base currently provides basing for the 24x7 alert for U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and North American Air Defense Command's (NORAD) air defense mission for the southeastern United States provided by Detachment 1 of the 125th Fighter Wing (Florida Air National Guard) which will be transitioning to F35 aircraft operations; and

WHEREAS, Homestead Air Reserve Base and adjacent property provides basing support to multiple federal joint and interagency operations and missions including: the headquarters facility and support for the Special Operations Command, South; aviation operations for the Customs and Border Patrol's Miami Air and Marine Branch; basing and training facilities for the United States Coast Guard's Maritime Safety and Security Team, as well as other tenant organizations; and

WHEREAS, Homestead Air Reserve Base also serves as home to the 50th Regional Support Group (Florida Army National Guard) and the base is the focal point for a major National Guard force rebalancing across the state to reposition more assets in South Florida with nearly \$65 million in planned construction and approximately 500 jobs to be added over the next decade; and

WHEREAS, Homestead Air Reserve Base is an important logistics and supporting location for contingency plans and response operations conducted by the Commander, U.S. Southern Command; Commander, Homeland Security Task Force Southeast; and The Adjutant General of the Florida National Guard; and

WHEREAS, Homestead Air Reserve Base is part of an ongoing South Florida Regional Military Installation Resilience Review (MIRR) Study, undertaken by the South Florida Regional Planning Council and funded by the Department of Defense's Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation, with matching funds from the State of Florida, that is identifying ways the surrounding community can further enhance the resilience and mission assurance of the base and its tenant commands; and

WHEREAS, sustaining and enhancing Homestead Air Reserve Base is important to the regional economy particularly South Miami-Dade, because it already contributes 4,700 direct and indirect jobs, nearly \$400 million in direct expenditures each year and estimated at more than twice that in total economic benefits when indirect impacts are considered; and

WHEREAS, planning and development efforts are underway by the South Dade Aerospace Technology Hub Consortium and Miami-Dade County to further develop aerospace industries adjacent to Homestead Air Reserve Base that leverage the air base proximity and can further generate mutually beneficial economic activity with industries that support national defense missions and civilian employment for Air Force Reserve technicians that serve at Homestead Air Reserve Base; and

WHEREAS, the South Florida Regional Planning Council recognizes that continued operation of Homestead Air Reserve Base is important to national security as well as the local and regional economy, and that its future operational capacity should be protected; and

WHEREAS, these recommendations involve actions and support by the U.S. Congress, the Florida Congressional delegation, the Florida Cabinet, and the Florida Legislature;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SOUTH FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL:

Section 1. That support for retention, sustained military aviation operations, including F35 basing, and increased military, homeland security, interagency, and national guard uses of Homestead Air Reserve Base be added as one of the SFRPC's priorities.

Section 2. Urges the U.S. Congress, the Governor, the Florida Cabinet, the Florida Legislature, and the Florida Defense Support Task Force to take actions that would support retention and increased military, homeland security, interagency, and national guard uses of Homestead Air Reserve Base.

Section 3. Urges the U.S. Congress to convert Homestead Air Reserve Base into a Joint-Interagency facility, co-owned and operated by the Department of the Defense and the Department of Homeland Security and supporting both defense and homeland security operations.

Section 4. Urges the U.S. Congress and the Florida Legislature to continue and increase annual funding for infrastructure improvements for Homestead Air Reserve Base.

Section 5. Urges the Florida Legislature and the Florida Cabinet to support the development of the property adjacent to Homestead Air Reserve Base that is available for military, homeland security, and national guard purposes.

Section 6. Directs Council Staff to provide copies of this resolution to each member of the Florida Congressional Delegation, the Governor and members of the Florida Cabinet, South Florida’s County Mayors, Commissioners, and County Administrators; the Chairs and Members of South Florida’s state Legislative Delegations, Miami-Dade and Broward County Leagues of Cities; and Secretaries of the U.S. Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Justice.

Section 7. This resolution will become effective upon adoption.

DULY ADOPTED by the Board of the South Florida Regional Planning Council this 16th day of June 2023.

Chair Steve Geller

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