

# State of Vermont House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

## Joint House Resolution

J.R.H. 2

Joint resolution supporting the assignment of the F-35A aircraft to the Vermont Air National Guard

Offered by: Representative McCullough of Williston

Whereas, the Vermont Air National Guard Air Station at Burlington International Airport (BTV) has hosted the F-16 since 1986, and the F-16's presence has had a positive economic impact at the airport and beyond, and

Whereas, according to the Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce, the Vermont Air National Guard (VTANG) plays an important role in the economy of Vermont including the maintaining of a contingent of 400 full-time employees and 700 part-time employees whose combined annual payroll is \$53 million, and

Whereas, annually, the VTANG provides \$2.5 million in fire and rescue services to BTV, and this expenditure represents 14 percent of the airport's total budget, and

Whereas, other annual VTANG economic contributions are the \$325,000.00 in lodging and food industry revenues associated with weekend drills and the \$50,000.00 in revenue associated with training center support activities, and

Whereas, the F-16 is aging, and the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Air National Guard intend that the more technologically advanced fifth generation F-35 Lightning II (F-35A), the conventional takeoff and landing version of the F-35, will replace the F-16 in their respective fighter jet fleets, and

Whereas, in April 2012, the U.S. Air Force released a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) assessing operational deployment locations for the F-35A within the continental United States, and

Whereas, according to the DEIS, the Burlington Air National Guard Station is one of the primary sites on the consideration list, and

Whereas, for several years, a number of residents of South Burlington and other nearby municipalities have expressed concern about the noise level of F-35A jets at Burlington International Airport, and



Whereas, in 2010, in response to these concerns, Brigadier General Steven Cray spoke at a forum in South Burlington about the Vermont Air National Guard's decades of experience and excellent heritage of working with neighbors on fighter jet noise problems, and he indicated this tradition will continue with the F-35A, and

Whereas, cumulative and excessive noise is a type of pollution, and

Whereas, those persons required to bear the burden of this pollution innocently suffer collateral damage for a perceived greater good, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly looks favorably upon the permanent assignment of the F-35A fighter jets to the Vermont Air National Guard's base at Burlington International Airport in South Burlington, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly supports the Vermont Air National Guard's transitioning to the next generation of aviation technology provided that the proposed use of F-35A fighter jets meets acceptable noise level standards for populated areas and that the final environmental impact statement demonstrates that the use will satisfy these standards, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly encourages collaboration among the Vermont Air National Guard, the Cities of South Burlington and Winooski, and the Towns of Williston and Essex, and other affected municipalities to identify and address environmental, health, housing, and workforce concerns, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly encourages the U.S. Air Force to broaden the scope of the final environmental impact statement for the purpose of real-time noise comparisons between the F-16 and the F-35A at Burlington International Airport under varying weather conditions, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to U.S. Air Force Secretary Michael Donley; the Vermont National Guard Adjutant General, Brigadier General Thomas E. Drew; and the Vermont Congressional Delegation.