

February 10, 2025

Re: Support Duluth Hangar Design Funding at the 148th Air National Guard Base

Dear Chair Franson, Ranking Member Lee, and Members of the House Capital Investment Committee-

On behalf of the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce and our approximately 1,000 members throughout northeast Minnesota, as well as the Duluth Chamber Foundation and our Military Affairs Committee, we are writing in strong support of funding for the removal of old single-bay shelters and construction of new universal aircraft parking shelters for the 148th Fighter Wing, Minnesota Air National Guard at the Duluth Air National Guard Base.

This funding will be the first major step towards demolition and replacement of the current, outdated hangars and allow for new and safer hangars, which will also be able to house updated aircraft such as F-35s. The men and women of the 148th deserve the best, and safest, equipment and hangars. They currently operate out of old, outdated and even potentially unsafe hangars. These hangars are over seventy years old and have several concerning safety issues including leaks, pooling water and electrical issues. This funding would allow the 148th to start the process of replacing the outdated hangars with state-of-the-art hangars to enhance safety and support the Bulldogs' current and future missions. It will also help leverage federal funding for additional infrastructure needs at the base, helping secure the mission of the 148th for decades to come.

Never before has more been asked of the 148th, which has included pandemic response and additional security missions throughout the state (including at the Capitol) in recent years, as well as combat deployments. The 148th made national headlines in 2023 for successfully shooting down an unidentified object over Lake Huron, further demonstrating their incredible relevance to national security, as well as their vast contributions to our community and state. The 148th has an annual economic impact of about \$115M in the region and serves as the area's eighth largest employer with well over 1,000 employees.

For these reasons and more, this proposal has broad community support, including a unanimous resolution by the Duluth City Council as well as a resolution of support from the St. Louis County Board of Directors. We are grateful for the service of the 148th. We are also grateful for your support, and your leadership and service to our state. We encourage you to help support the men and women of the 148th Fighter Wing. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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