

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 1, 2017

Lt Gen Maryanne Miller
HQ USAF/RE
1150 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1150

Dear Lt Gen Miller,

We are writing you today regarding the Fitness Facility at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) located in Wheatfield, New York. NFARS is home to the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) 914th Airlift Wing and the Air National Guard 107th Airlift Wing.

The current fitness facility on the base, located in building 855, has grown outdated for the current and future needs of the base. All units on the base support 24-hour, 7 days a week, 365 days a year mission sets. It is critical that the service men and women on this base have access to a fitness facility that matches these needs. The current facility does not meet the 24-hour need and it does not accurately allow these men and women to handle the stress associated with their missions.

Western New York winters can be grueling and it has come to our attention that the current fitness facility does not have an indoor track. Service members are forced to waive the cardiovascular fitness-testing portion of their physical fitness tests for up to 6 months due to weather conditions. This has a direct effect on readiness, training requirements, and time. When the cardiovascular portion of the exam is waived, it makes the service members ineligible to reach a score of over 90-percent and therefore they cannot have their 6-month testing requirement extended to 12-months. This leads to an increase in testing requirements in an already over-crowded facility.

The current facility has also become physically dangerous due to a lack of safe clearances. The facility's space for equipment is inadequate to maintain effective safety protocols and NFARS is forced to close base roads for the use of fitness testing during summer months. When exercise outside is not possible, the base buses servicemen and women to local universities and fitness centers in order to fulfil their physical fitness needs.

Further delays in this project will cost the Air Force Operations and Maintenance Budget more money in the end. It is our understanding that a new fitness facility is in the FY21 program for the AFRC and that it is the number one quality of life project in AFRC.

We are respectfully requesting that the new fitness facility at NFARS is prioritized far sooner than FY21. It is our priority to ensure the safety and security of the men and women serving at NFARS. This includes their having access to an exceptional year-round fitness facility.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out to either of our offices with any questions.

Sincerely,



CHRIS COLLINS
Member of Congress



BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress