

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

September 27, 2022

The Honorable Frank Kendall
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Kendall:

We write to reiterate our concerns about the ongoing U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM) basing process and urge you to consider critical cost and national security factors as you review Space Command's pathway to Full Operational Capability (FOC), prior to the issuance of a final decision.

The Department of Defense Inspector General (DOD IG) and Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports make clear that senior military leadership recommended Peterson Space Force Base (SFB) in Colorado Springs as the preferred choice for USSPACECOM's permanent headquarters due to its unique ability to achieve FOC faster than any other candidate location.

The DOD IG directed the Secretary of Defense to review these well-documented concerns pertaining to FOC. It is our understanding that Secretary Austin has tasked the Department of the Air Force to conduct such a review.

We urge you to address the following elements as you conduct your analysis of Full Operational Capability at Space Command:

- **Renovation of Building 1.** As the DOD IG and GAO reports highlight, senior military leaders proposed the renovation of Building 1 at Peterson SFB as the best option to reach FOC in the fastest and most cost-effective manner relative to any other candidate location. Rather than considering a renovation scenario, however, the previous administration rushed an already flawed process and made a decision with incomplete information. Any evaluation of FOC should account for the prospect of renovating the facilities in which USSPACECOM already functions at Initial Operational Capability.
- **Cost Estimates.** Your evaluation should also account for the national security cost, with respect to both time and money, of forgoing the fastest possible pathway to achieving

FOC. In a 2021 position paper drafted by Retired Air Force General Ed Eberhart and Retired Army Lieutenant General Ed Anderson, the authors estimate that “allowing Space Command to remain in Building 1 saves taxpayers \$1.24 billion dollars” and provides a pathway “to reach full mission capability up to 7 years faster.” Generals Eberhart and Anderson also raise the concern of the cost of workforce attrition, which the GAO report identified as one of the “significant shortfalls in transparency and credibility” of the data considered in the revised basing process. We urge you to provide a full assessment of the financial implications of each scenario under consideration—including renovating Building 1 at Peterson SFB. The assessment should address the cost of construction for new infrastructure, including communications systems, and indirect costs such as workforce relocation and training.

We request a briefing on your review prior to any final decision to understand how the Air Force has accounted for critical national security and cost implications.

The Air Force must assure Congress and the American people that the final decision is rooted in defensible evidence. A final decision must be based on the imperative to face rapidly evolving threats in space, especially in light of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and China’s expansion of regional influence. We cannot afford to delay Space Command’s pathway toward reaching Full Operational Capability.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator

CC:

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III,
Secretary of Defense