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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-0308

July 2, 2020

The Honorable Barbara M. Barrett  
Secretary of the Air Force  
1160 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20330

Dear Secretary Barrett,

As an elected official representing the State of Arizona, I thank you for your leadership as the Department of the Air Force in coordination with the Office of Secretary of Defense considers a permanent basing location for the U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM) headquarters. I am writing to you about locating USSPACECOM in Arizona, specifically Youngtown, Arizona. Based on the screening and evaluation criteria released by the Department, we can assure you that the Town of Youngtown would be an excellent permanent basing location for USSPACECOM.

The Town of Youngtown is located within the Phoenix Metropolitan Area which has a population of approximately 4,193,129 and is a little over 14,500 square miles. The Town of Youngtown is located less than 10 miles from Luke Air Force Base (Luke AFB). Luke AFB is home to the largest fighter wing in the U.S. Air Force and home to the Air Education and Training Command. It is one of seven key military installations located throughout the state.

As a longtime Arizona resident, you are well aware of the role that Arizona has played in training and supporting our country's armed forces. With more than 300 days of sunshine, Arizona has attracted aerospace & defense industry giants such as Raytheon, Honeywell, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics and more. More than 1,200 Arizona-based companies make our state America's third-largest supply chain contributor for aerospace & defense and the second-largest employer in space & defense systems manufacturing. For instance, Northrup Grumman Innovation Systems produces satellites in the greater Phoenix area. Scientists from around the world visit Arizona's Mount Graham International Observatory and the Lowell Observatory to conduct research on submillimeter wavelengths, extraplanetary systems and star positioning.

Arizona is also home to four major research institutions that work with NASA via the NASA Space Grant program. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Prescott Campus is ranked first in the nation for its undergraduate Aerospace, Aeronautical, Astronautical engineering programs. Furthermore, Arizona State University and The University of Arizona have been instrumental in furthering research about Mars, including developing instruments used on the Mars rovers.

Additionally, Northern Arizona University has developed a curriculum that aligns with the state's aerospace & defense initiatives. This includes diverse astrophysics programs, mechanical engineering, aerospace studies, adaptive research and materials, composites and optics. Arizona has the infrastructure, research capacity, workforce and industry to support the mission of USSPACECOM. Furthermore, it is a part of a region that played a foundational role in the creation of our country's space program.

The American Southwest played a historic role in the development of supersonic research and advanced space flight. Seventy-three years ago, Brigadier General (Ret.) Charles "Chuck" Yeager broke the sound barrier over the Mojave Desert forever changing the landscape of aviation and aerospace. This historic flight ushered in an era of advanced research that culminated in the birth of our country's space program. Now known as Edwards Air Force Base (Edwards AFB), this significant military installation is the home of the Air Force Test Center, the Air Force Test Pilot School, and NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center. Most importantly, Edwards AFB is located less than 500 miles away from Youngtown, Arizona. This monumental legacy, etched by aviators and astronauts of past decades, paved the way for the next great era of space exploration with the leadership of the United States Space Force.

Given all that Arizona has done and continues to do to support space exploration, it seems ideal that Youngtown, Arizona would be the permanent home for USSPACECOM. I respectfully urge your consideration of our request and thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,



Debbie Lesko  
Member of Congress