



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

GARLIN GILCHRIST II
LT. GOVERNOR

December 17, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As governor of the great State of Michigan, the peace and prosperity of my citizens is always in the front of my mind as I work on their behalf each day. In your travel this week to my home state, I write to highlight some critical issues particularly significant to Michigan and to convey their importance to the economic vitality of The Great Lakes State:

- **Shoreline Erosion.** The Great Lakes are the largest system of fresh surface water in the world, providing drinking water to over 40 million people and acting as an important economic engine for a variety of industries in Michigan and the region as a whole. The state's shoreline across The Great Lakes system at 3,288 miles is more than any other state, except Alaska. Unfortunately, it is a shoreline that is fragile and faced with an eroding coast.

According to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), approximately 250 miles of shoreline along Lakes Michigan, Superior, and Huron are eroding more quickly than others, at an average rate of one foot or greater per year over at least 15 years. Great Lakes researchers have said that fluctuating lake levels, along with reduced ice cover and intense storms from climate change, increase shoreline erosion and leave lakeshore communities more vulnerable to flooding.¹ Eroding beaches and coastal bluffs in communities across the state have meant homes have literally been washed away, and the \$955 million in coastal tourism income generated in the state is increasingly threatened.²

Federal funding for efforts that can protect and restore critical coastal elements has never been more important or necessary, making federal funding for The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and its related programs that help combat erosion levels along The Great Lakes ever more important. We cannot simply wait for erosion to worsen, but

¹ ["The Climate Crisis in Michigan."](#) U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow; October 2019.

² [Ocean Action Agenda.](#) Joint Ocean Commission Initiative; March 2017.



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should instead be proactive by investing in programs that reduce costs to communities impacted by these slow-moving disasters. Mitigation efforts can have a 6 to 1 return on investment and is a significant tool to reduce federal disaster spending across the country. As the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) implements the Disaster Recovery Reform Act's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program, I urge your administration to support resiliency efforts that aid states and local communities as they work to recover from, and protect against, the quickening, and oftentimes sudden, pace of shoreline erosion.

- **The Soo Locks.** In Michigan, we know how vital the Soo Locks are to our economy and national defense. The Locks are essential to the movement of the raw materials used by steel producers, automakers, and other major manufacturers in The Great Lakes region and beyond. Unfortunately, the two operational locks - the Poe and the MacArthur - are aging and deteriorating, and unscheduled outages are increasing due to mechanical failures. The Soo Locks are the single point of failure in The Great Lakes maritime system and the nation's iron ore supply chain. A 2015 study by the Department of Homeland Security found that a six-month unplanned closure at the Soo Locks would devastate production of integrated steel, automobiles, and other heavy equipment throughout North America and would decrease U.S. gross domestic product by \$1.3 trillion.³

A new lock in Sault Ste. Marie is projected to cost over \$900 million and take close to ten years to build. I am proud of the strong, united work the Michigan Congressional Delegation has done to authorize and champion the modernization of the Soo Locks, and I fully support my state's \$52 million contribution to advance the construction of a new Poe-size lock. But we need consistent federal action to complete the work ahead. As you craft your Fiscal Year 2021 budget, I urge you to include continued funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for this vital project, which will provide much needed resiliency in the Great Lakes Navigation System.⁴

- **F-35 Mission at Selfridge Air National Guard Base.** Selfridge is one of the most advanced and most diverse Air National Guard bases in the country. Located in the heart of Macomb County, Michigan, it is a Joint Military Community whose major tenants include the U.S. Army, Air Force, Marines, Navy, Coast Guard, and Customs and Border Protection. Given the infrastructure and capacity at Selfridge, along with our northern Michigan training facilities in Alpena and Grayling, I am confident that it is in the best interest of the Nation, both operationally and fiscally as well, to locate the F-35 Lightning II at Selfridge.

³ <http://www.greatlakesports.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/OCIA-The-Perils-of-Efficiency-An-Analysis-of-an-Unexpected-Closure-of-the-Poe-Lock-and-Its-Impact.pdf>

⁴ https://www.lre.usace.army.mil/Portals/69/soolocks/SooLocks/NewLock_InfoSheet_OCT2019.pdf



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Selfridge has the capacity to bed down the F-35 at a minimal cost, all the while meeting 100 percent of the required F-35 Ready Aircrew Program training requirements. The base supports more than one million square feet of ramp space and the ability to hangar 21 F-35s today with no added construction. While this advantage supports an exceptionally low conversion cost to the taxpayer, Selfridge also enjoys widespread and universal local support from the community and the Michigan Congressional Delegation as well.

I am enclosing my recent letter to Air Force Secretary Barbara M. Barrett on the siting of the next Squadron of F-35s at Selfridge and urge its consideration and selection as a new host for this important mission.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Whitmer
Governor of Michigan

Enclosure:
Letter to Secretary Barrett re: F-35 mission



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December 11, 2019

The Honorable Barbara M. Barrett
Secretary of the Air Force
1680 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Barrett:

Congratulations on your confirmation as the 25th Secretary of the Air Force. I am writing to invite you to Michigan to visit Selfridge Air National Guard Base (ANGB) in Macomb County and to urge you to select Selfridge ANGB as one of two locations to host the Air National Guard's next F-35A operational bases.

As the Governor and Commander in Chief of the Michigan National Guard, I understand that the residents of this state who chose to place 'service before self' deserve the best leadership, training, readiness, and equipment available. This belief drives my request for you to choose Selfridge ANGB and the 127th Wing as a preferred site for fielding the F-35.

Selfridge leverages Michigan's tremendous assets of premier facilities, ideal geography, welcoming people, and advanced technology-based industry. The base has the capacity to bed down the F-35 at a minimal cost, while meeting 100 percent of the required F-35 Ready Aircrew Program training requirements. Selfridge supports more than one million square feet of ramp space and the ability to hangar 21 F-35's today with no added construction. Additionally, Michigan is home to the largest and most diverse training airspace and ranges east of the Mississippi, with extensive organic electronic warfare training capabilities. This airspace is a proven joint training area which leverages the Grayling Range and the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center – ideal for the 5th generation fighter.

For over 100 years, the residents around Selfridge ANGB have hosted military airfield operations and provided Selfridge and its tenants an abundance of community support. State and local elected officials stand with Macomb County residents in welcoming a potential F-35 mission.

As you make your choice of sites to base the next Squadron of F-35s, I invite you to Macomb County to learn first-hand that Selfridge has the people, infrastructure, airspace, and community support to quickly, efficiently, and economically transition from the A-10 to the F-35. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Whitmer
Governor of Michigan