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Feb. 22, 2010

The Honorable Mayor Bob Walkup
Care of Tucson Lightning
162nd Fighter Wing Minuteman Committee
PO Box 22343
Tucson AZ 85734

Dear Mayor Walkup,

The Arizona Builders' Alliance fully supports the efforts of the 162nd Fighter Wing Minuteman Committee in its mission of championing Tucson International Airport as one of this nation's premier fighter pilot training installations and as a pilot training site for the next generation of the U. S. Air Force fighter, the F-35.

In these difficult economic times we are presented with a great opportunity to secure the future of the 162nd Fighter Wing in Tucson by supporting the effort to make Tucson the home of the F-35 aircraft. The Arizona Air National Guard has long served this nation as a pilot training center and this community as a powerful economic force. The 162nd Fighter Wing adds \$280 million to the local economy and employs about 1,450 Tucsonans.

Without the F-35 mission, Tucson stands to lose that \$280 million annual economic impact generated by the 162nd Fighter Wing because the F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft currently flying from TIA will eventually be phased out of the Air Force inventory. For that reason, we must do everything possible to ensure Tucson International Airport is selected as a fighter pilot training site for the F-35.

There are many advantages in locating pilot training in Tucson, such as its year-round flying weather, its proximity to the Barry Goldwater training range and its existing military aviation infrastructure. Equally important is the community support for the continued role of the Guard and its mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide continued support for the Arizona Air National Guard at Tucson International Airport by making it an F-35 training base. Let's do everything we can to ensure a prosperous future for Tucson and our nation's defense.

Sincerely,

David Pittman
Arizona Builders' Alliance
Southern Division Director

