



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

Bruce Rauner, Governor

November 23, 2015

Ms. Amy Blair
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Kansas City District, Room 529
601 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106

Re: Scott Air Force Base (AFB) (St. Clair County)/MidAmerica St. Louis Airport
Belleville/Mascoutah, Illinois
National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA)
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Dear Ms. Blair:

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) pledges our strong support for the St. Clair County site as the best choice for the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's (NGA) new western campus. The move to Illinois would be strategically advantageous for the NGA, and would promote major new economic development and jobs in the entire southern region of the State. As St. Clair County is a fast-growing, non-metro and largely rural area, investments in the area would go far in bringing new opportunities to its residents.

The site is ideal from many perspectives. On the cost side, the land will be donated by the County. It is undeveloped and construction could begin quickly. Because transportation infrastructure upgrades in the area are already in process, NGA's workers would be assured smooth travel to their new workplace. The site's proximity to Scott Air Force base, as well as other Department of Defense assets, provides valuable enhancements for the NGA's national security mission.

Further, the significant federal investment would spur ancillary economic development in the area. Given the speed by which the NGA could begin to build, new businesses and services would quickly find the area an attractive place to be. This would not only bring new resources to the NGA's workers, but also the nearly 10,000 active duty and civilian employees at Scott Air Force Base and the neighboring communities. With new construction and new businesses will come significant new jobs in the region.

Finally, Illinois continues to be a national leader in educating and attracting top science, technology, engineering, and math talent. The State is home to over two hundred R&D institutions spread out across the state, from Argonne and Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory to the University of Illinois and the University of Chicago. Innovative regional partnerships add new capabilities every day. Recently, St. Clair County, local colleges, and Scott Air Force Base created the Midwest Cyber Center of Excellence to enhance the cybersecurity training and certification opportunities in southern Illinois. The Illinois

Innovation Index reports that more than one in four degrees earned in Illinois are in STEM subjects, resulting in a highly qualified pool of young talent for NGA's long-term workforce needs.

DCEO stands ready to assist all of the stakeholders in maximizing this opportunity, and we urge the NGA to choose the St. Clair County site for its replacement facility. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Andria Winters, Assistant Director of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity at (312) 814-2811 or via email at Andria.winters@illinois.gov.

Sincerely,



James Schultz
Director

CC: Mark Kern, St. Clair County Board Chairman
Tim Cantwell, Director, MidAmerica St. Louis Airport