

# State of Vermont

## Senate Chamber



Montpelier, Vermont

### Joint Senate Resolution

By Senator Zuckerman,

**J.R.S. 24.** Joint resolution related to the conduct of collaborative hearings and the basing of the F-35A in Vermont.

*Whereas*, since 1946, the Vermont Air National Guard (VTANG) at the Burlington International Airport (BTV) has been an integral part of the Vermont National Guard family, and

*Whereas*, all Vermonters appreciate the dedication and sacrifice made by the many men and women who serve in or work for the VTANG, both those who are full-time and those who are part-time, and

*Whereas*, although Vermonters greatly appreciate the many contributions the VTANG has made to Vermont, the proposed basing of the F-35A fighter jets at BTV as a replacement for the currently based F-16C fighter jets raises significant noise issues that warrant the completion of a comprehensive collaborative hearing process prior to a final decision on F-35A basing at BTV, and

*Whereas*, the U.S. Air Force has prepared a draft Environmental Impact Statement (draft EIS) as part of the decision-making process for determining basing sites for the F-35A, and

*Whereas*, the implementation of the F-35A proposal at BTV would result in a peak noise level of 115 decibels, which is four times louder than the current F-16C peak noise level, and

*Whereas*, revised statistical estimates based on the 2010 U.S. Census increase the impacted population to 8,592 and the housing units to 4,200, and

*Whereas*, according to a December 19, 2012 *Burlington Free Press* article, slightly less than \$39 million of federal funds was spent to purchase 136 residential properties in South Burlington that have been or are scheduled to be torn down because the noise level to which these properties are exposed exceeds the Federal Aviation Administration's recommended maximum level, and

*Whereas*, the draft EIS included a scoring system of factors at each of the proposed F-35A bases, and

*Whereas*, with respect to air and noise standards, the U.S. Air Force awarded BTV the maximum three points for the clear zone category, which indicates there is no development within a specific distance of BTV even though this is not an accurate fact, and

*Whereas*, similarly, the 65 decibel day-night average sound level contour zone score of three indicates there is no development within this zone, even though the draft EIS, using 2000 U.S. Census data, estimated that 6,675 persons reside in this zone, and

*Whereas*, the City of Burlington, the Burlington Airport Commission, the Congressional Delegation, the Governor of Vermont, and the U.S. Air Force have refused to respond adequately to the many questions raised by both the South Burlington City Council and concerned citizens, and

*Whereas*, the General Assembly's adoption of J.R.H.51 occurred on May 12, 2010, a full 22 months before the draft EIS was released in March 2012, and one of the clauses in

J.R.H.51 encouraged collaboration among the Vermont Air National Guard, the City of South Burlington, and other affected municipalities to identify and address environmental, health, housing, and workforce concerns, and

*Whereas*, the collaborative process that the General Assembly requested in J.R.H.51 of 2010 has yet to occur, and

*Whereas*, according to U.S. Air Force Colonel Joe Beissner, Chief of the Combat Aircraft Division at Air Combat Command, two programs are now planned to extend the life of the F-16C, which the VTANG currently flies, beyond 2030 to fill any gaps resulting from problems with the F-35A's deployment, and

*Whereas*, one program, intended to extend the life of the plane from its current 8,000 flight hours to 10,000–12,000 flight hours, will be based on a full-scale durability test of the aircraft scheduled for fiscal 2015, and

*Whereas*, upgrades or changes to the plane, based on the test results, would follow, and

*Whereas*, the second multiple component upgrade, scheduled to begin in 2018 and end by 2022, is known as the combat avionics programmed extension suite, and includes a modern replacement of the plane's scanning radar and the installation of new display screens and a new electronic warfare suite, and

*Whereas*, furthermore, this is only the first round of F-35A basing decisions, and during a future round, considerably more data may be available regarding the impact of basing the F-35A in Vermont, and

*Whereas*, in a statement released on December 11, 2012, 16 members of the Vermont clergy recommended that "Vermont be removed from the first round of basing decisions so that we Vermonters can reach a consensus, based on clearing up so many of the questions that remain unanswered in the minds of many residents," *now therefore be it*

***Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:***

That the General Assembly agrees with the learned clergy's advice and requests that Vermont be removed from consideration in this round of F-35A basing decisions, *and be it further*

***Resolved:*** That in accordance with the General Assembly's adoption of J.R.H.51 of 2010, the General Assembly requests the U.S. Air Force, the Vermont Air National Guard, the City of South Burlington, the City of Winooski, the Town of Williston, and the City of Burlington to conduct collaborative hearings with concerned citizens on environmental, health, housing, and workforce issues related to the F-35A prior to the issuing of a final decision on basing at Burlington International Airport, *and be it further*

***Resolved:*** That the General Assembly respectfully requests that the collaborative hearing process provide detailed responses to all concerns that affected residents may raise, *and be it further*

***Resolved:*** That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to U.S. Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley; to the U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff, General Mark A. Welsh III; to Vermont National Guard Adjutant and Inspector General Steven Cray; and to the Vermont Congressional Delegation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

Attested to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the House

\_\_\_\_\_  
John H. Bloomer, Jr.  
Secretary of the Senate

Date:\_\_\_\_\_