

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 26, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Barrett,

Thank you for your service. As co-chairs of the bipartisan California Aerospace Caucus, we write to offer our assistance as you stand up the United States Space Force and to highlight the advantages of locating facilities in California. In addition to there being several well-suited locations in our state for U.S. Space Command headquarters, Southern California offers tremendous advantages for housing the procurement arm of Space Force. We specifically encourage you to fully leverage the Southern California space and aerospace ecosystem by locating Space Systems Command at Los Angeles Air Force Base.

According to reports, Space Force is considering the establishment of a Space Systems Command (SSC) to oversee all procurement organizations, including Space and Missile Systems Center (SMC), Space Rapid Capabilities Office, and Space Development Agency. While we are cautious of any reorganization that results in duplication or undercuts any organization that currently delivers value, we believe a new Systems Command may present an opportunity to capitalize on the space and aerospace intellectual capital of the world located in Southern California.

As you know, SMC manages a majority of the Defense Department's space portfolio and has long been a national asset, due in part to its location in a space ecosystem unlike any other in the world. As we wrote to former Secretary Jim Mattis in December 2018 and former Acting Secretary Shanahan in April 2019, SMC is uniquely situated at Los Angeles AFB, in the heart of our nation's most critical cluster of industry, researchers, and workforce—all of which provides immense military value to our space acquisition system. In particular, SMC's co-location with Aerospace Corporation, a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC), has been vital to the success of the Department's space procurement and launch capability.

Due to SMC's proximity to Southern California's innovation and technological-expertise, SMC has been able to cultivate synergies with three FFRDCs, nearby military installations with space-related missions, top university programs in aerospace engineering and computer science, leading space companies, and the nation's only aerospace startup accelerator. SMC has also been successful in implementing SMC 2.0, a reorganization that incorporates an enterprise view of space systems and has sped up the development acquisition process.

Space is a unique, enormously complicated domain with little margin for error. There is a saying that “to have a rocket scientist with 20 years of experience, takes 20 years.” There is nowhere else in America with the existing talent that Southern California brings to space. With rapid challenges from our near peer competitors in space, it is essential that the new Space Force capitalizes on our nation’s existing space assets. Should a new Systems Command be established to oversee space procurement, we strongly encourage you to select Los Angeles Air Force Base as its headquarters.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We look forward to working with you to support and advance U.S. capabilities in space.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Mark D. Esper, Secretary of Defense
General Mark. A. Milley, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
General John W. Raymond, Chief of Space Operations
General David L. Goldfein, Air Force Chief of Staff
Lieutenant General John F. Thompson, Commander, Space & Missile Systems Center
The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor of California

TWL/cj