

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 7, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

We are writing to express support for the Muroc Joint Unified School District's application for a Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) grant of \$9,165,000. If awarded, this funding would construct a modern 14,000-square-foot hangar and classroom facility to be used for the expansion of the Aircraft Maintenance Technology Training Program at Desert Junior-Senior High School, located on Edwards Air Force Base (AFB). This project directly supports the Department of Defense's (DoD) goals to strengthen community infrastructure that enhances military readiness and workforce development.

This project responds directly to a national shortage of certified aircraft maintenance personnel – a challenge that threatens both commercial and military aviation readiness. As the DoD modernizes its test infrastructure and prepares for a technology-driven future, the need for a skilled, locally grown aviation maintenance workforce is more urgent than ever. Edwards Air Force Base, the home of the Air Force Test Center, depends on technicians who can service legacy and next-generation aircraft alike. Its remote desert location is ideal for testing experimental platforms but presents persistent challenges in recruiting and retaining the military and civilian personnel needed to support the base's operations.

The area is also home to key aeronautics assets such as Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) China Lake, Air Force Plant 42, NASA Armstrong Flight Research Center, and the Mojave Air and Space Port. Together, these organizations form a dense and strategically vital aerospace corridor that depends on a consistent pipeline of technical talent. Building this pipeline on-base, in partnership with the local school district, is a strategic investment in both the local defense community and our long-term national defense.

The proposed construction of a 14,000-square-foot hangar and training facility would provide critically needed space to accommodate growing student demand and expand course offerings. The Aircraft Maintenance Technology Program has already proven successful, placing students into high-skill aviation maintenance jobs in both the civilian and military sectors. This new facility will allow for the eventual establishment of a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-approved curriculum, enabling students, military-connected students, dependents of active-duty servicemembers, and local youth from the surrounding defense community, to graduate with the qualifications necessary to immediately enter the aviation workforce. Students will receive

hands-on training in aircraft systems, airframe structures, propulsion systems, and routine maintenance and inspection procedures aligned with FAA Part 147 certification standards.

This project enjoys strong support from Edwards Air Force Base leadership, including Brigadier General Douglas P. Wickert, Commander of the 412th Test Wing, who has emphasized the program's value to both the installation and the broader defense industrial base. It also represents a long-term investment in sustaining the highly specialized testing and flight operations unique to this region. The proposal reflects a shared local and federal commitment to building a sustainable pipeline of skilled aviation maintenance professionals essential to Edwards AFB and its national defense ecosystem.

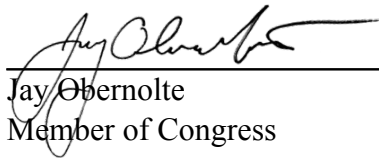
We firmly support the Muroc Joint Unified School District's proposal to the Defense Community Infrastructure Program to construct a state-of-the-art aviation maintenance training center. This investment will strengthen our defense community, enhance workforce readiness, and help sustain the future of American airpower. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Vince Fong
Member of Congress



Jay Obernolte
Member of Congress



George Whitesides
Member of Congress

cc:

Mr. Patrick J. O'Brien
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