

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2005

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Department of Homeland Security
Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

In August 2004, we wrote your predecessor to ask him to consider Selfridge Air National Guard base in Mount Clemens as a possible location for the proposed Northern Border Air Wing base in Michigan. To date, the Department has stated that the Michigan facility is still scheduled to open this year, but no location has been announced. We are writing to request the status of the Department's deliberations on where to locate the Northern Border Air Wing base in Michigan.

As noted in our previous letter, Selfridge Air National Guard base is a secure, fully-operational facility situated on 3,200 acres of land owned by the federal government. The infrastructure accommodates the needs of a military and civilian workforce and can be easily accessed by military and civilian aircraft, watercraft, and ground transport via air, water, rail, and interstate highway.

A Selfridge-based Northern Border Air Wing, like those operating out of New York and Washington, could operate out of Selfridge with ease. The Michigan National Guard recently completed a full upgrade of its runway and it could easily handle the needs of the entire Immigration and Customs Enforcement Service, Air and Marine Operations inventory.

While the Office of Air and Marine Operations has set a goal of a one-hour response time within 250 miles of its Northern Border stations, an acceptable response time for the greater Metropolitan Detroit area must be even shorter. This region is the home of three of our nation's busiest border crossings and a massive industrial base which is vital to our national security and economy. The addition of a Marine Air Branch in this vital region would bring the technology and equipment necessary for protecting this regions border crossings and critical infrastructure.

Selfridge is already home to the Border Patrol and Coast Guard and we believe the addition of an Air and Marine Operations, Northern Border Air Wing would fill a security gap along the Northern Border.

We urge your careful consideration of this location and look forward to hearing the status of your department's deliberations.

Sincerely,

