



Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce
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February 25, 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

SUBJECT: Chamber asks Valparaiso to work with Air Force

The Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors approved a resolution (see attached) urging the City of Valparaiso to withdraw their planned lawsuit against the United States Air Force at their regular board meeting on February 25th.

“Our business community is concerned that the delay or possible loss of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program bed-down at Eglin Air Force Base will result in a significant negative impact to the economy.”, stated Chairman of the Board, Brian Walsh of Key Lime Homes. “With the state of the economy, our area is fortunate to have such a strong military presence that provides jobs not only to members of the military but also to local residents through civil service and contractor positions.”

The Chamber has monitored the issue over the past months but did not voice concerns believing the parties involved could work through the problems without jeopardizing this program. “Several of the members of the Chamber’s Military Affairs Committee (MAC) voiced concerns over the lawsuit at our meeting on February 20th”, said MAC Chairman, Jim Heald, InDyne Inc. “There was a unanimous vote to draft a resolution to put before the Chamber’s Board of Directors asking the City of Valparaiso to work with the Air Force and withdraw their planned lawsuit.”, Heald continued to state, “Their legal action could result in a significant blow to our local economy.”

Chairman Walsh additionally stated, “This proposed lawsuit could potentially have a negative impact on a three county area”, “We agree that the City of Valparaiso’s concerns regarding potential noise and safety need to be addressed. However, we urge them to resume discussions with the Air Force to find mutually acceptable solutions. Eglin’s missions have changed many times over the years and the community has been able to adjust and continue the positive relationship and we believe that should continue.”

The resolution will be delivered to Valparaiso City officials and will also be distributed to other Chambers of Commerce and municipalities in the area.

RESOLUTION 2009-1

**A RESOLUTION OF THE NICEVILLE VALPARAISO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
REQUESTING THAT THE CITY OF VALPARAISO WITHDRAW THEIR LAWSUIT AGAINST
THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

WHEREAS, the Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) including the Military Affairs Committee (MAC) of the organization believes a constructive relationship between the United States Military and its surrounding communities is absolutely essential to the military and to the communities, and

WHEREAS, the Chamber and the MAC have a long tradition of avoiding local government politics, preferring instead to allow individual businesses and citizens to express individual opinions and concerns to the municipalities individually;

The Chamber and the MAC would register an opinion regarding a local political issue only if its members were unanimous about a matter of great public importance, and

The Chamber and the MAC considers the lawsuit by the City of Valparaiso against the United States Air Force to be ill-advised, counterproductive, and of such public importance as to demand a response by this group, and

WHEREAS, every local government and community has a long record of efforts to pursue the military, the Congress, and the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), that our military presence and their missions should be maintained and strengthened, and

The lawsuit filed by the City of Valparaiso could delay or significantly weaken the military presence at Eglin Air Force Base, and cause negative economic impact to our communities, and

WHEREAS, the Chamber and the MAC believe there are alternate, more constructive ways to achieve a long-term beneficial relationship without the lawsuit presently authorized to be filed;

We believe alternate efforts, including mitigation, if made in good faith outside a courtroom, have a higher probability of success than lawsuits, without risking the benefits we receive from the military and,

Alternative approaches working with the United States Air Force will accomplish one of the Broad Strategic Goals that the Valparaiso City Commission unanimously approved as part of their most recent Strategic Plan;

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED:

The Chamber and the MAC repeat our previous endorsement and support of our neighbor, Eglin Air Force Base, and its present plans to expand and accommodate the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program.

We now unanimously express our disapproval and request withdrawal of the lawsuit authorized to be filed by the City of Valparaiso against the United States Air Force regarding their Record of Decision and plans for beddown of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter force at Eglin Air Force Base, and

We urge the Commissioners of the City of Valparaiso to reconsider their authorization to file lawsuits that the Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and Military Affairs Committee unanimously believe in the strongest terms, is unnecessary and destructive for our communities.

Adopted this 25th day of February, 2009

Brian Walsh, Chairman of the Board

Jim Heald, Military Affairs Chairman

ATTEST:

Tricia Brunson, President & CEO