

THE F-35 JET: A RECORD OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND DISCOURSE

Senator Leahy has heard from hundreds of Vermonters concerning the basing of the F-35 with the Vermont National Guard. The final basing decision for the F-35 will be made not by Congress, but by the United States Air Force. In an effort to open the channels of communication between Vermonters and the Air Force, Senator Leahy has supported the holding of public forums, office meetings, and open comment periods.

Public Hearings for Supporters and Opponents to Voice Their Opinions

In 2009, the Air Force began its exploration of sites to base the F-35s, including a public meeting held in December 2009. **In 2012 alone, eight public meetings and forums have been held in Chittenden County** to facilitate Vermonters in expressing their views about the possible basing of the F-35s with the Vermont National Guard.

- May 14, 2012 - Air Force Public Hearing
- May 21, 2012 – So. Burlington City Council Meeting
- May 21, 2012 - Burlington City Council Meeting
- July 11, 2012 - Burlington Ward 1 Meeting
- September 13, 2012 - Winooski School Meeting
- Oct. 17, 2012 - St. Michael's College Forum
- Oct. 31, 2012 - Shelburne/Charlotte Rotary Meeting
- Nov. 13, 2012 - Winooski Com. Partnership Meeting

In addition to these public meetings, **the Air Force has provided briefings to elected officials**, giving them the opportunity to ask questions about the impacts of basing the F-35 with the Vermont National Guard.

- May 9, 2012 – Briefing: Burl. Mayor Weinberger
- May 29, 2012 - Joint Briefing: Winooski Government and the Burlington International Airport
- June 11, 2012 – Briefing: So. Burlington City Council
- June 18, 2012 – Briefing: Burlington City Council
- July 12, 2012 - State House briefing
- July 20, 2012 – Briefing: Governor Shumlin

Senator Leahy Has Responded to Hundreds of Vermonters Inquiring About the F-35, and His Staff Has Met and Spoken with Opponents of the Basing.

While the **Air Force is the ultimate arbiter of the decision of where to base the F-35**, the Senator Leahy and the Vermont congressional delegation has facilitated communication between Vermonters and the Air Force, and they have also responded to hundreds of constituents with questions about the F-35 basing decision.

The **Air Force extended the public comment period of the Environmental Impact Statement by over two weeks and has received and recorded more than 13,700 comments about the F-35**, and in letters, the Vermont delegation has urged the Air Force to listen to all Vermonters commenting on the basing decision, to respond to the questions posed by the South Burlington City Council, and, this summer, the delegation wrote to the Air Force urging them to maximize noise mitigation practices. **Senator Leahy alone has responded to over 300 constituents contacting his office about the F-35s.**

In addition, since 2010, **Senator Leahy's staff has met with representatives of the Stop the F-35 Coalition** and other Vermont constituents concerning the F-35.

A Decision by the Air Force

Whether to base the F-35 with the Vermont National Guard, or elsewhere in the country, **is a decision that will be made by the United States Air Force, not by Congress.** Nonetheless, Senator Leahy has been vigilant in ensuring that Vermonters' voices have been heard in this process. **Any objective review of the public record clearly shows that these issues have received extensive public discussion and review over the last year.**