

TO: Chair Lee, House Capital Investment Committee
Chair Pappas, Senate Capital Investment Committee
FROM: Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce
RE: Duluth Hangar Design Funding at the 148th Air National Guard Base
DATE: April 29, 2024

Dear Chair Lee and Chair Pappas -

On behalf of the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce and our approximately 1,000 members in northeastern Minnesota, as well as the Duluth Chamber Foundation and our Military Affairs Committee, we are writing to thank you for your support of the \$3M request for design funding of much needed new hangars at the 148th Fighter Wing in Duluth in your Capital Investment Committee omnibus bills.

This funding will be the first major step towards demolition and replacement of the current, outdated hangars and allow for new and safer hangars, which will also be able to house updated aircraft such as F-35s. The men and women of the 148th are second to none and deserve the best, and safest, equipment and hangars. They currently operate out of old, outdated and even potentially unsafe hangars. These hangars are over seventy years old and have several concerning safety issues including leaks, pooling water and electrical issues. This funding would allow the 148th to start the process of replacing the outdated hangars with state-of-the-art hangars to enhance safety and support the Bulldogs' current and future missions.

Never before has more been asked of the 148th, which has included pandemic response and additional security missions throughout the state in recent years, as well as combat deployments. The 148th made national headlines in 2023 for successfully shooting down an unidentified object over Lake Huron, further demonstrating their incredible relevance to national security, as well as their vast contributions to our community and state. The 148th has an annual \$112M economic impact for our region and serves as Duluth's eighth largest employer.

For these reasons and more, this proposal has broad community support, including a unanimous resolution by the Duluth City Council. We are grateful for the service and vast contributions of the 148th FW. We are also grateful for your support, and your leadership in assembling these important bills.

Sincerely,



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