

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

October 9, 2020

The Honorable Mark Esper  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Secretary Esper:

Tomorrow, October 10, 2020, marks the second anniversary of Hurricane Michael making landfall near Mexico Beach, Florida. Hurricane Michael, a powerful category 5 hurricane with sustained winds of more than 160 miles per hour, brought unprecedented devastation to communities across the Panhandle. As we approach the two year anniversary of that deadly storm, I write to thank the Department of Defense (DoD) for their commitment to rebuild Tyndall Air Force Base (AFB) and urge you to ensure the installation is back to full operational capacity as soon as possible.

As you know, Tyndall AFB sustained massive damage from the effects of Hurricane Michael, with approximately 60 percent of facilities suffering significant damage. Tyndall AFB has played a critical role in our country's national security as the training home of the F-22 Raptor. Tyndall will also become home to three full squadrons of F-35 Lightning IIs and a squadron of MQ-9s and its proximity and access to the Joint Gulf Range Complex provides a unique opportunity to maximize the training provided to these new fifth-generation fighter pilots. The installation serves as a major source of jobs in the region and has a large economic footprint across Northwest Florida.

Through my efforts on the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Congress has provided the funding necessary to rebuild and expand Tyndall's operational capacity. Because of the funding provided, it is vital that the DoD continue to include Tyndall's future reconstruction and operational requirements in its budget planning cycle. I look forward to continuing to work with you, and others in the administration, to further provide Tyndall AFB with the resources needed to return to full operational capacity to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I stand ready to assist.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator