

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 3, 2021

The Honorable Frank Kendall
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Secretary Kendall:

We write today with great concern regarding the availability of affordable housing for servicemembers at Fairchild Air Force Base (AFB) in Spokane, Washington, and to request Air Force completion of a full Housing Requirement and Market Analysis (HRMA) for the installation.

The Spokane and Airway Heights communities have long supported and partnered with Fairchild AFB and continue to help ensure its servicemembers thrive. In recent years, however, the local housing market has changed dramatically, making it difficult for Fairchild military families to find suitable and affordable housing in the area. The Spokane region's apartment vacancy rate has been at or below 2.1 percent since the spring of 2019, falling to as low as 0.6 percent this past spring. According to the Washington Center for Real Estate Research, the apartment vacancy rate is currently just 1.4 percent. Further, housing prices have increased by 28.2 percent in the last year, and the population continues to grow with another 48,000 residents anticipated by 2030. Off base economic growth, including the addition of an Amazon Fulfillment Center, is expected to create even more competition for apartments and townhomes. The current and projected low vacancy rates and increasing rental costs are incredibly concerning and will continue to significantly impact Airmen and their families at Fairchild.

On base housing availability is extremely limited as well. Fairchild AFB Privatized Housing currently has a 97.8 percent occupancy rate, with 621 out of 635 available houses occupied. Of the 14 units currently unoccupied, 13 have already been pre-leased. There are currently 149 military families on a waitlist for base housing, with wait times ranging anywhere from one to nine months. There are even reports of Airmen living in recreational vehicles on base. This is unacceptable – our servicemembers and their families need safe, affordable housing to live in, and Air Force action is needed.

The last full HRMA for Fairchild AFB was conducted in 2005. Though a validation of that HRMA study was conducted in 2019, a complete and thorough analysis of the Fairchild local housing market and its ability to meet military housing demand has not been conducted in over 16 years. The Spokane region's housing market has changed significantly in recent years and, as such, a new assessment of the local housing market and potential need for additional military family housing is required. Local housing market conditions demand renewed attention from the

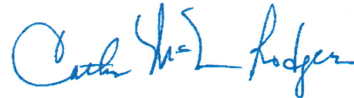
Air Force in order to ensure Fairchild AFB families have access to the affordable and dependable housing they deserve.

A new HRMA is necessary to thoroughly assess the availability of suitable and affordable housing in the local area, as well as the needs of the Fairchild AFB military population. This must be done as expeditiously as possible to ensure we are supporting our servicemembers to the best of our ability. We know you understand the importance of providing for our servicemembers who have sacrificed so much for our country. We appreciate your attention to this important issue and look forward to our continued work together on behalf of all servicemembers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patty Murray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patty Murray
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cathy McMorris Rodgers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress