

MAR 20 2015

The Honourable Peter Kent, M.P.  
Chair  
Standing Committee on National Defence  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Kent:

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence. It is my understanding that in support of your mandate to review all matters pertaining to the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, the Committee has been engaged in an analysis and study of issues relating to the theme of *Defence of North America*.

As the Committee's deliberations remain ongoing, I wanted to ensure it had opportunity to consider the contributions of Newfoundland and Labrador and to highlight the importance of 5 Wing Goose Bay to the defence of North America, perimeter security and to Canada's priorities relating to Arctic sovereignty. As you know, 5 Wing Goose Bay's longstanding mission involves extensive support for Canadian Forces, Allied, and North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) training and operational priorities. It has served as a strategic air force centre since the 1940s and has hosted multinational training activity for North American and European allies for generations.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador remains confident there is a promising future for military activity at 5 Wing so long as federal commitments to pursue enhancements to this installation are implemented. These commitments have included a January 4, 2006 commitment from the Prime Minister (then Leader of the Opposition) to then-Premier Williams to:

- station a Rapid Reaction Battalion with a complement of 650 regular force personnel for enhanced Atlantic army response at 5 Wing;
- station a long range Unstaffed Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) squadron at 5 Wing to provide surveillance over the Atlantic Ocean and Eastern Arctic; and,
- maintain a foreign military training program and encourage increased allied flight training at 5 Wing.

More recently, in his April 25, 2011 letter to then-Premier Dunderdale, Prime Minister Harper asserted that a "re-elected Conservative Government will continue to make solid progress on the future of operations at 5 Wing."

Successive Newfoundland and Labrador Premiers and Ministers have pressed the federal government to deliver on these promises, but to date all essentially remain outstanding. While intermittent military training occurs at 5 Wing, the base is significantly underutilized.

In keeping with the federal commitments discussed, 5 Wing has great potential given its access to vast air space and northern remote geography, to serve as a centre for UAV and drone testing. Indeed, it has been understood through public reports the Department of National Defence plans for UAV deployment in Canada are underway, with the goal they be available for operations in 2021 and that all drones, personnel and infrastructure would be in place by 2023. A further area of growth relates to ground-based training. A number of exercises focusing on survival and harsh environment training have taken place and the opportunity for more is significant.

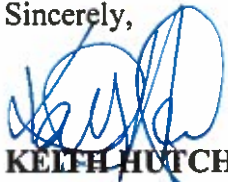
5 Wing remains a key training centre for Canadian military, Canadian Rangers and allied forces and has the potential to support northern operations for NORAD, facilitate coastal monitoring and search and rescue, as well as strengthen Canada's position relating to Arctic sovereignty. From our perspective, the Arctic is a strategic priority and 5 Wing is a critical component of that agenda.

Consistent with that position, the Province has embarked upon an Arctic Opportunities Initiative aimed at positioning it as the gateway to the Arctic. Our goal is to help foster an environment in which stakeholders and northern communities can benefit from emerging opportunities, and further attract global industry. As a strategic military centre and an engine of economic growth in the region, 5 Wing has and will continue to serve as critical infrastructure for business activity in Labrador.

Given the significant and well maintained infrastructure, vast training area and airspace, 5 Wing is well-placed to become a leader in emerging unstaffed systems technology. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, including through its Research and Development Corporation, is a strong supporter of the innovative companies, R&D organizations and academic institutions that are working together to develop cutting-edge technologies in unstaffed marine, land and aerial systems that can directly aid maritime and Arctic security.

Our Government has asked for a clear mandate for 5 Wing Goose Bay from the federal government to ensure its future is protected and we will continue to press for this. As you conclude your deliberations and bring forward recommendations pertaining to the Defence of North America, I hope your committee will consider the important role Newfoundland and Labrador, specifically 5 Wing Goose Bay, has played and can continue to play in matters of national defence and Arctic opportunities in Canada. In that vein, you and your Committee are welcome to visit the Province to view this and other important military installations as you complete your work in this area.

Sincerely,



**KEITH HUTCHINGS, MHA**

District of Fersyland

Minister of Municipal and Intergovernmental Affairs

cc. The Honourable Keith Russell  
The Honourable Darin King