

***WNY Delegation Urges Customs and Border Protection to Fund Construction Of a New Border Patrol Station at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station******Niagara Falls Border Patrol Station Is Outdated & Cannot Accommodate Agents; WNY Delegation Pushing For New Station at NFARS to House & Train Up to 75 Agents, Increase Space for Vehicles, Maintenance & More******New Station at NFARS Would Ensure Border Patrol Has All Tools Necessary to Protect Our Border***

Washington D.C. - Today, U.S. Senators Charles E. Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand and Representatives Louise Slaughter, Brian Higgins and Kathy Hochul urged the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to construct a new border patrol station at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) as it seeks a replacement for the outdated Niagara Falls Border Patrol Station. In addition, the representatives are urging the agency to find funding for this new construction within appropriations for either construction and facilities management or border infrastructure in their Fiscal Year 2012 budget. Construction of a new border patrol station at NFARS would be critical to CBP's mission as it would accommodate up to 75 agents at the facility, and would provide additional space for training, administration, vehicle maintenance and other activities that are essential to protecting the northern border. In addition, the representatives argued that in light of recent Department of Defense budget cuts, constructing the CBP's new border patrol station at NFARS would help strengthen the installation's role as an active and central player in the nation's national defense.

"Locating the new border patrol station at the Niagara Air Base is the smart thing to do, which is why I have been pressing DHS to do so for years," said Congresswoman Slaughter. "It is an efficient use of federal resources co-locating facilities from two agencies and it takes advantage of the incredible workforce of Niagara County and Western New York. I can't wait until officials from Customs and Border Protection learn firsthand that the Niagara Air Reserve Station is the crown jewel of the Air Force."

"As Customs and Border Protection considers sites for a new border patrol station, Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station must be at the top of their list," said Schumer. "It is clear that the existing border patrol station can no longer accommodate the needs of its border agents, and a new station at NFARS would provide the resources, training facilities, and space necessary to ensure that our border patrol can continue doing top-notch work protecting our northern border. What's more, with Department of Defense budget cuts looming, the construction of this station would also help keep the Niagara Falls Air Reserve station as a critical player in both our national security and Western New York's economy. That's why I'm joining the Western New York delegation in urging Customs and Border Protection to fund the construction of its new patrol station at NFARS, as it would be a win-win-win for the border patrol's mission, the air reserve station's vitality, and the Western New York economy."

"Bringing a Customs and Border Patrol mission to Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station would enable the agency to leverage the major assets we have right on site, including the air field, firing range, and the medical clinic," said Senator Gillibrand, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. "This is a highly cost-effective method that would give Customs and Border Patrol access to these resources it wouldn't otherwise have – and it's a step we should take to keep this economic engine for Western New York."

"This is a common sense coordination of facilities that continues to meet the need of both agencies, provides efficiencies that deliver cost savings and expands the site portfolio to extend the long-term viability of the base," said Congressman Higgins.

"As I said last week at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, I believe the construction of a new Customs and Border Protection station will not only help protect our border, but will also add a valuable boost to the Western New York economy with the creation of up to 75 new jobs," said Congresswoman Hochul. "As a Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, I understand the threats related to the border, which is why I will continue to fight alongside the other Members of the Western New York delegation to bring this station to Niagara Falls."

Schumer, Gillibrand, Slaughter, Higgins and Hochul are urging Customs and Border Protection to choose the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station as the location to construct a new Border Patrol station and to appropriate necessary funding for the plan through either construction and facilities management or border infrastructure investments for FY12. The CBP is in the process of identifying a location for a new Border Patrol station to replace the Niagara Falls Border Patrol Station, which is outdated and cannot properly house the number of agents currently

working there. The new station at NFARS would provide 50 border protection agents comfortable accommodations, and could be modified to accommodate up to 75 agents. If constructed at NFARS, the new Border Patrol Station would bring a variety of facility and resource upgrades, and would include administrative buildings, a K-9 unit, additional training and detention facilities, as well as more space for parking and vehicle maintenance. The Western New York delegation is pushing for the feds to choose the NFARS for the construction of this new station and to appropriate necessary funding to do so, to ensure that the agents can be best equipped and trained to protect the northern border and to ensure the continued vitality of the station.

The representatives push to bring the CBP's new border patrol station to Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station would help strengthen the station's mission and maintain its critical role in our national security and in the Western New York economy. In January, the Department of Defense announced that it would seek to make major cutbacks at bases across the country in order to slim down the defense budget over the next decade. The Department's announcement highlighted Air Force plans to retire 65 C-130 aircraft cargo planes, like those at the Niagara Falls base, and also raised a longer term proposal to conduct two rounds of military base closures in the next several years. Following that announcement the lawmakers' wrote to Secretary Leon Panetta to highlight that the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, which supports 2,630 employees and an annual direct economic impact of \$131 million, is too critical to both the nation's military and Western New York's economy to be considered for cutbacks. Schumer, Gillibrand, Slaughter, Higgins and Hochul are calling on CBP to bring a critical custom and border protection station to the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, which would accommodate an increased number of border protection agents, and help preserve the stations role as a major contributor to national security.

A copy of the representatives' letter to DHS and CBP appears below:

Secretary Janet Napolitano

Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

February 15, 2012

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Washington, DC 20528

David V. Aguilar

Acting Commissioner

United States Customs and Border Protection

1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano and Commissioner Aguilar,

We write to urge you to find funding within your appropriations for either construction and facilities management, or border infrastructure, for FY 2012, to construct a new Border Patrol station at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station to replace the existing Niagara Falls Border Patrol Station.

As you know, the existing Niagara Falls Border Patrol Station is insufficient for your current needs. It lacks the capacity needed to accommodate the number of agents now housed at the station and does not have the space and resources your agents need to fully do their jobs.

A new station at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station can comfortably accommodate 50 agents and can be modified to accommodate 75 agents. The station will also include critical items that the Border Patrol needs, such as a main administration building that will be suited for mustering and training, and will include space for an armory and necessary storage. It will also include ancillary buildings that will house vehicle maintenance, enclosed parking, and kennels.

This new station would be a win-win both for the Border Patrol and for the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. We have worked very hard to make sure that the Border Patrol has all of the tools and resources it needs to protect our northern and southern border. Now it is time for Border Patrol to use those funds for their intended purpose, to replace outdated bases with bases that are needed.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter, and look forward to working with you to make the new Border Patrol Station at Niagara Air Base a reality.

Sincerely,

U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter

Congressman Brian Higgins

Congresswoman Kathy Hochul