

US Air Force Release
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Air Force announces criteria for basing of joint strike fighter

WASHINGTON - After extensive internal review, the Air Force released today its basing criteria that will be used to determine the future basing of its Joint Strike Fighters.

The basing criteria were approved by the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force. The basing criteria are airspace, flight training ranges, weather, support facilities, runways, taxi ramps, environmental concerns and cost factors.

"The Air Force is committed to an open and transparent process to address F-35 basing issues," said Ms. Kathleen Ferguson, Air Force deputy assistant secretary for installations, "Ensuring affected communities are involved, know what to expect and understand timelines for development are critical to the end process of basing all future Joint Strike Fighter aircraft."

The AF will evaluate more than 200 Air Force sites against the approved criteria. Once that is complete, the AF will consider other factors such as combatant commander requirements, aircraft retirements and delivery schedules; aircraft maintenance and logistics support; and integration with the Air National Guard and Reserve. This information will be used to identify two candidate basing lists, one list for operations and the other for training, to place the 250 to 300 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft scheduled for delivery through 2017.

After the release of the candidate bases, the formal environmental impact analysis process will begin, allowing communities around each candidate base to participate and provide input. Based on the results of these efforts, the Air Force expects to announce the JSF preferred locations in late Spring 2010.

Once the formal Environmental Impact Statements are complete, the Air Force will issue the Records of Decision and announce the final basing decisions. This is anticipated in early calendar year 2011.

"This enterprise-wide look enhances our ability to create, protect, and sustain all air and space forces across the full range of military operations," concluded Ms. Ferguson. "It is a deliberate, repeatable and transparent process."