That WHEREAS, on March 6, 2018, by a vote of 6,482 to 5,237, the voters of the City of Burlington approved the following citizen-initiated ballot item:

“Shall we, the voters of the City of Burlington, as part of our strong support for the men and women of the Vermont National Guard, and especially their mission to ‘protect the citizens of Vermont,’ advise the City Council to:

1. request the cancellation of the planned basing of the F-35 at Burlington International Airport, and
2. request instead low-noise-level equipment with a proven high safety record appropriate for a densely populated area?;” and

WHEREAS, the Vermont Air National Guard provides valuable service to the community and to the country that is greatly appreciated by the City of Burlington; and

WHEREAS, the Vermont Air National Guard has a seven-decade long record of outstanding service at Burlington International Airport and beyond; and

WHEREAS, during the community discussion of the ballot item, the proponents stated that the United States Air Force told them that there are several alternative meaningful missions for the Vermont Air National Guard, though Guard officials have indicated there is no alternative mission; and

WHEREAS, proponents also claimed this potential new aircraft/mission would not jeopardize the existing 1100 jobs associated with the Vermont Air National Guard, the fire and crash rescue services they provide to Burlington International Airport and the surrounding communities, nor the prolonged future of the highly valued Air National Guard; and

WHEREAS, while the approved question stated “strong support” for the Vermont Air National Guard and their importance to our community, the expectation was that the alternative mission would reflect the value of the Guard to our community and offer a quieter plane, with proven high safety record appropriate for our population density;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Burlington City Council respectfully requests the Honorable Secretary of the United States Air Force also answer the following additional questions or claims that were raised by the media and/or proponents of the ballot question and community members, leading up to the vote on the F-35 basing:

* Is there another mission that would be available to the Vermont Air National Guard without jeopardizing their future service to the state of Vermont or defense of our nation?
* Safety concerns were raised about hours of flight time relative to prior aircraft models deployed to Burlington - can you explain why the flight hours are lower with the F-35, and is some of that time accounted for through alternative simulated training?
* Is simulated flight time proven to be comparable to actual flight time?
* News media reports alleged Burlington was the only populated area where F-35’s have been deployed, though it appears F-35’s will also be stationed in Madison WI and Montgomery, AL. Could you clarify if Burlington is the only populated area where F-35’s will be deployed?
* News media reports allege the F-35 has not undergone any operational testing or dog-fighting exercises, and further indicated such activity would occur for the first time in Burlington. Is it accurate that these tests and exercises have not been completed? Regardless, would the F-35 go through such testing in Burlington?
* Would the stealth coating create additional environmental concerns if the plane crashed as compared with an F-16 or commercial jet?
* Does the F-35 use the same fuel that the F-16 and commercial jets use?
* Would C-130 transport planes likely be less noisy and disruptive to the adjacent community than

 F-35’s?

* Proponents of the ballot question claim the F-35 is 4 times louder than the F-16, based on extrapolations from the Environmental Impact Study (EIS); however, the noise contours in the EIS are not reflective of this statement. Is the F-35 4 times louder than the F-16?
* The EIS estimates the F-35 will be using after-burners 5% of the time. Is that expected to be the case when operating at BTV?; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Burlington City Council values the Air National Guard’s contributions to our community and respectfully requests the Honorable Secretary of the United States Air Force, Heather Wilson, replace the planned basing of the F-35 with a basing of a low-noise-level plane with a proven high safety record, consistent with the ballot question previously cited; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Burlington City Council respectfully requests a written response from the Honorable Secretary Wilson related to the above requests, in writing, by May 1, 2018.

lb/EBlackwood/Resolutions 2018/BIA – F-35 basing at Vt. Air National Guard – Requesting the Secretary of the Air Force to provide an alternative mission for the Guard

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