

Coalition for National Security Research

January 29, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the undersigned members of the Coalition for National Security Research (CNSR) – a broadly-based coalition of industry, research universities, and associations united by a commitment to a stronger Defense S&T base – we write to express our concerns about the potential relocation of the Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR) from its headquarters in Arlington, Virginia to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. We believe this proposal, if enacted, could significantly impact our organizations' confidence in the Air Force's ability to manage its basic research portfolio.

The AFOSR-sponsored basic research portfolio has led to many of the innovations and capabilities currently used by the Air Force, and provides a pipeline for the technical workforce at the Air Force Research Lab. We are concerned that co-locating the AFOSR with the Air Force Research Lab could result in a diminished role for the basic research portfolio in favor of a more applied focus.

This is primarily due to the potential loss of AFOSR workforce who, based upon past trends in Department of Defense organizational moves, would not relocate to Ohio - replaced instead by AFRL employees with the technical background, but more near-term applied focus. This may not only impact the future innovation pipeline for the Air Force, but could also reduce support for graduate education critical for cultivating the technical workforce necessary to stay one step ahead of the ever-changing threats facing our national security.

We are concerned that AFOSR will lose the benefits of its strategic location in Arlington, VA and its close proximity to the vast majority of federal basic research offices, including the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the Department of Energy's Office of Science, and the National Science Foundation, and others. This close proximity provides AFOSR's program officers access to the ideas and opportunities of their counterparts in other federal basic research agencies; promotes communication, cultivates collaborative relationships. All of this would be lost if AFOSR is relocated to Wright-Patterson AFB, and could diminish AFOSR's ability to effectively manage its basic research portfolio.

In conclusion, we believe the proposed relocation of AFOSR would be a "4" as described in the January 24, 2014 request for information. We urge that AFOSR remain in its current location and welcome continued dialogue on this issue.

Sincerely,

American Chemical Society

American Mathematical Society

American Physical Society

Arizona State University

Association of American Universities

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Boston University

Columbia University

Computing Research Association

Duke University

Florida State University

George Mason University

Johns Hopkins University

North Carolina State University

Princeton University

Texas A&M University

The Optical Society

University of California-Irvine

University of California-Santa Barbara

University of California System

University of Chicago

University of Colorado-Boulder

University of Delaware

University of Maryland-College Park

University of Michigan

University of Tennessee-Knoxville

University of Texas System

University of Washington

Vanderbilt University