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ARMED SERVICES

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RANKING MEMBER—SEAPOWER AND  
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READINESS

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HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, LABOR, AND PENSIONS



Joe Courtney  
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November 13, 2015

The Honorable Melody A. Currey  
Commissioner  
Connecticut Department of Administrative Services  
165 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Commissioner Currey:

Over the last several months, I have been hearing from a growing number of constituents in the Willington area about their deep concern about the potential construction of a new state police training center in the area.

Connecticut's State Police plays a critical role in protecting our communities and enforcing the law. I support ensuring that they have the resources and support to provide the training and education they need. At this time, two sites have been identified as potential locations for a large new 55,000 square foot training center – one in East Windsor and another in Willington. As you know, the residents of Willington and their local elected officials – whom I represent in Congress – have expressed a range of serious concerns about this plan and its impact on their community.

It is my understanding that an environmental impact study must be completed on both the East Windsor and Willington sites. Further, it appears that such a review will take a significant period of time given the need to conduct seasonal studies to measure the potential impact of noise from the new facility. While funds for this work have been authorized, it appears that the State Bonding Commission has not actually allocated the funds to start this work.

Local support for a project of this nature is absolutely vital to its success. Given the strong opposition from local leaders and members of the community, it appears clear to me that continued efforts to pursue the Willington site will only serve to exacerbate the already strong concerns expressed by the community. Further, given the cloud of uncertainty that will hang over the community during the time in which funding is considered and such a review will take, it is my hope that your department will instead look for other alternatives to the Willington site – both in terms of location and for the potential use of existing facilities that could augment state police training needs.

For example, as a member of the House Armed Service Committee, I helped to advocate for and secure \$14 million in federal funding in 2008 for the new Connecticut National Guard firing

range in East Haven. This facility, which is now in operation, features an 8 lane Combat Pistol Qualification Course, a 12 lane Tube Range, and a 20 lane Basic 10/25 Meter Firing Range. These facilities can support a broad range of weaponry and training scenarios, with fully automated targets and computer driven target scenarios. The ranges are also fully baffled for noise reduction. Notably, the ranges are regularly used by other federal and local law enforcement agencies, and it is my understanding that there is sufficient capacity to support expanded use of the range by the Connecticut State Police. And, in my view, as a member of the readiness subcommittee that oversees military installations and base closing authority, joint multi-agency use of facilities like this help to elevate their military value and underscore the joint nature of the investment should our state ever face another base closing round in the future.

It is my hope that your department will reconsider the potential use of existing firing ranges and training sites in Connecticut before moving forward on any efforts to conduct reviews for a new training center. Thank you for your consideration of my concerns, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Courtney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress