

FACT SHEET:**The Risks of Single Siting Growler Aircraft at NAS Whidbey Island**

Summary: *The Navy's plans to add 35-36 more E/A-18 G Growlers to Whidbey Island, with another 42 on order, would double the fleet of electronic warfare aircraft and concentrate 96% of them in one geographically vulnerable location – a coastal island served by a bridge and two ferries. Not only is this an operational security risk, it is a risk to military readiness in a post-9/11 world.*

The Navy is proposing a unique concentration of electronic warfare jets on Whidbey Island

- E/A-18G Growler is essentially the only electronic warfare (EW) jet in action, in any of the US military forces, after retirement of USAF EF-111 Raven and USMC E/A-6B Prowler
- Growler is only Navy jet that is single sited. All others have at least 2 bases.
- Currently there are 82 Growlers at NAS Whidbey Island; with 35-36 more planned in the draft EIS.
- The Selected Acquisition Report shows that 42 more are on order¹, bringing number of Growlers planned for Whidbey to 153, with 7 forward deployed to Atsugi, Japan.

Whidbey is geographically vulnerable due to access only by bridge or ferry

- Deception Pass Bridge links Whidbey to North; carries water main for all of NAS Whidbey Island and Oak Harbor. Historic bridge on public highway.
- Bridge is only 24 hour vehicle entrance/egress to Whidbey
- Bridge is part of DOD Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET)²
- Bridge is a Federal Highway Administration "Critical Bridge" because of its span length, STRAHNET status, major evacuation route, and carrier of utilities³
- Terror attack of 100-500 lbs of TNT would damage the bridge³
- Earthquake could severely damage bridge; limiting access for weeks to months

The FBI cites Seattle ferries as one of two top maritime terrorist targets

- Two WA State Ferries provide only other vehicle/passenger access to Whidbey
- Clinton route serves 2.2 MM vehicles annually, Coupeville route 372K vehicles annually
- 2004 Navy analysis showed Seattle ferries vulnerable to terrorist attacks⁴
- FBI lists Seattle ferries as #1 maritime terrorism target (along with Gulf Coast tankers)⁵
- Even with heightened WSF security measures, boats can still collide with ferries⁶

Single Siting Electronic Warfare Aircraft Limits Military Readiness

- All military services are now dependent on Growler for EW functions
- F-35 not online, USMC and USAF facing 3-5 year gap in capability⁷
- Over half of Army, USMC, special Forces and tactical AF units are on East Coast⁷
- East or Gulf Coast siting would protect against attacks on Gulf Coast tankers

How you can help: Share this information, and visit the "Action" Tab of CCA's website –
www.coupevillecommunityallies.org

Prepared June, 2017 by Coupeville Community Allies
References on Reverse

References for Single Siting Fact Sheet:

¹ **Selected Acquisition Report, Fiscal Year 2017**

http://www.dod.mil/pubs/foi/Reading_Room/Selected_Acquisition_Reports/16-F-0402_DOC_51_EA-18G_DEC_2015_SAR.pdf

² **Strategic Highway Network Maps – Washington State**

<https://www.sddc.army.mil/sites/TEA/Functions/SpecialAssistant/STRAHNET/Washington.pdf>

³ **AASHTO National Needs Assessment for Ensuring Transportation Infrastructure Security**

<https://blackboard.angelo.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/LFA/CSS/Course%20Material/BOR6311/Readings/NatlNeedsAssess.pdf>

⁴ **AP Story -** <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2004/oct/11/ferries-possible-terrorist-target/>

⁵ **Office of the Inspector General - FBI's Efforts to Protect Nation's Seaports**

<https://oig.justice.gov/reports/FBI/a0626/final.pdf> , p. 68.

⁶ **Seattle Times:** <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/watch-boat-called-nap-tyme-collides-with-washington-state-ferry-near-vashon-island/>

⁷ **US Naval Institute:** <https://news.usni.org/2017/01/03/opinion-improve-land-based-electronic-warfare-aircraft-readiness>