



American  
Physical  
Society

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January 27, 2014

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To Whom It May Concern:

As president of the American Physical Society (APS) and its more than 50,000 members, I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed relocation of the Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR) from Arlington, VA to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, OH. As the sole basic research funding agency for the U.S. Air Force, AFOSR plays a critical role in the basic research enterprise of universities nationwide. AFOSR's long-standing commitment to funding basic research projects and its more recent participation in innovative programs, like the Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative (MURI) Program, has resulted in revolutionary scientific advances and improved national defense.

AFOSR's impressive efforts are aided by its strategic location in Arlington, VA. Its proximity to nearly all of the federal basic research offices (Department of Energy's Office of Science, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, etc.) promotes communication, cultivates synergistic relationships, and provides AFOSR's employees critical access to their civilian counterparts. Relocating to Wright-Patterson AFB will essentially eliminate these benefits and severely limit AFOSR's interaction with other agencies, which is central to its function.

A relocation to Wright-Patterson AFB also threatens to alter AFOSR's culture, with the emphasis shifting from basic to applied research. Based on previous Department of Defense organizations' moves, most current AFOSR staff would not relocate with the office and would likely be replaced by Air Force Research Lab (AFRL) employees. While experts in applied research, the latter have little or no experience in basic research. The loss of institutional knowledge, combined with the shift from basic to applied research and the loss of AFOSR's oversight of AFRL's basic research program, would cripple the Air Force's long-term basic research program.

For the above stated reasons, I submit the impact of the proposed relocation of AFOSR would be a "4" and urge a more thorough analysis before any action is taken.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. R. Beasley".

Malcolm R. Beasley  
President of the American Physical Society