

**TOWN OF HURLEY
RESOLUTION NO. 14 – 2018/2019**

TOWN OF HURLEY RESPONSE TO AIR FORCE AIRSPACE EXPANSION OVER THE GILA FOR HOLLOWMAN AFB F-16 TRAINING

WHEREAS, Town of Hurley supports US military forces and acknowledges that the US Air Force is experiencing a severe pilot shortage, necessitating increased pilot training at Holloman Air Force Base (AFB), NM; and

WHEREAS, the Air Force has proposed expansion of its special use airspace (SUA) for Holloman's F-16 training mission as part of an ongoing regional airspace optimization program; and

WHEREAS, one of three alternatives currently being considered involves expanding Holloman's existing SUA through creation of a new military operations area (MOA) – Lobos MOA - and expansion of the existing Cato/Smitty MOA over the Gila National Forest and Gila Wilderness and adjacent areas in Grant and Catron counties; and

WHEREAS, the Holloman F-16 training is projected to involve approximately 10,000 sorties to train 300 pilots annually, including low-level flights (500 feet above ground level) and as many as 1,000 supersonic flights annually, as well as dropping 15,000 flares and 15,000 bundles of chaff per year as part of training in defensive countermeasures; and

WHEREAS, the Air Force is currently evaluating Holloman airspace optimization alternatives under the National Environmental Policy Act and will develop an Environmental Impact Statement to identify environmental concerns and ways to minimize and mitigate them; and

WHEREAS, the local community is overwhelmingly concerned about the potential significant impacts of the F-16 training missions over the Gila to public safety, health and environmental quality, such as: the potential for catastrophic wildfire from dropping flares; negative impacts on outdoor activities; danger to people, livestock and wildlife from F-16 training; potential harmful effects on people's health from daily loud noise, including sonic booms; environmental contamination from dropping chaff and flares over the Gila National Forest; and potential air quality degradation from 10,000 F-16 sorties annually; and

WHEREAS, there is major concern about the impacts of the Holloman F-16 training mission over the Gila on the local amenities-based economy that is dependent upon tourism and retirees attracted to the area's rural setting, natural surroundings, weather, quiet, dark skies, friendly people and sense of community; and

WHEREAS, the Gila Wilderness is the world's first wilderness area designated in 1924, has significant national historic and cultural value, and should be protected from potentially harmful F-16 training; and

WHEREAS, popular recreation areas in Grant and Catron counties, including the Gila National Forest, Continental Divide Trail, Gila Cliff Dwellings, and Catwalk, that support hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, birding, astronomy and horseback riding could be negatively impacted by Holloman's expanded F-16 training mission over the Gila; and

WHEREAS, there is strong opposition from community members, local government and elected officials to the Holloman F-16 training mission over the Gila region, including more than 150 Grant County businesses that have signed a letter opposing F-16 training over the Gila; more than 3,000 people who that have signed a petition

opposing the F-16 training over the Gila; a resolution passed unanimously by the Grant County Commission that requests that the Air Force use other proposed and existing areas for F-16 training; a letter passed unanimously by the Silver City Town Council that requests that the Air Force choose to not establish a new MOA over Grant County, the Gila National Forest, and Gila Wilderness; and an op-ed in the *Silver City Daily Press* written by Senator Martin Heinrich stating that the Gila is an inappropriate location for F-16 training.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY Town of Hurley that it recognizes the need for Air Force F-16 pilot training and the substantial economic impact for the State of New Mexico from the expansion of F-16 pilot training at Holloman AFB; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, given the potential for tremendous negative impact on public safety and health, environment, quality of life, and local economy of Town of Hurley and Grant County from expansion of Holloman's special use airspace over the Gila region, we believe that the Gila is an inappropriate location for F-16 training and recommend that other proposed or existing areas be used for Holloman's F-16 training mission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we encourage the Air Force to hold public meetings on the draft Environmental Impact Statement in Grant County as it will be impacted by the special use airspace expansion alternative #2; and

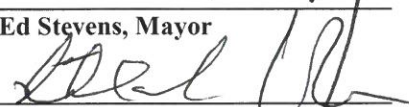
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Military Base Planning Commission, New Mexico federal delegation, Air Force-Pentagon, and Holloman Air Force Base.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this 12th day of February 2019, in Hurley, Grant County, New Mexico.

TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN OF HURLEY, HURLEY, NEW MEXICO:



Ed Stevens, Mayor



Richard Maynes, Mayor Pro Tem



Esther Gil, Council



Freddie Rodriguez, Council



Mateo Madrid, Council

ATTEST:



Lori Ortiz, Town Clerk