

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

To: House Appropriations Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

Subcommittee

Date: Tuesday, May 20th, 2025

From: The Honorable Michael Rulli (R-OH-6)

Re: Member Testimony for Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

Appropriations Subcommittee Member Day

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Committee Members for allowing me to submit written testimony for the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee Member Day. I'm honored to discuss critical investments for our community as you shape the Fiscal Year 2026 budget.

I want to highlight a vital defense asset in our community: the Youngstown Air Reserve Station (YARS). I supported this project in the state legislature and continue to advocate for it now.

Specifically, I'm pushing for a new fire station at YARS, located in Congressman Dave Joyce's district but a major employer for both our districts. This project directly affects working families in Ohio's 6th Congressional District.

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The new fire station is essential to support YARS's growing mission and protect the federal investment in its modernization. YARS hosts the Department of Defense's only aerial spray mission—a unique capability that strengthens our national defense and helps our country, allies, and neighbors during emergencies.

Last year, YARS began receiving new C-130J Super Hercules aircraft, a major investment. But the current fire station is outdated, putting both the mission and personnel at risk. A modern fire station is critical to keep this mission safe and effective. This project has been in the Future Years Defense Program since 2023, and I'm thankful the Committee supported early design funding in FY24.

The current fire station faces serious challenges. Critical firefighting equipment is stored over 700 feet away due to limited space, slowing emergency responses and disrupting operations. Without a new facility, YARS cannot safely support its national or local missions.

In FY25, the Pentagon requested \$25 million for this fire station—one of only three projects they sought from this Committee. Both the House and Senate appropriations bills included funding, and the final Continuing Resolution provided slightly more than requested for Air Force Reserve construction.

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It seems Congress intended for fully authorized projects like this one to move forward. I hope the Committee can work with the Pentagon to confirm this before the full 2026 Defense budget arrives.

In closing, thank you for your support of this project. The new fire station is vital to protecting the economic investment in Northeast Ohio. As someone who recently served in the statehouse, I can confirm that YARS is a model of collaboration between the local port authority, community, state, and federal partners.

I ask to work closely with you to ensure this fire station project moves forward, safeguarding the Aerial Spray Mission and the dedicated airmen and women who serve at YARS. Thank you for considering this critical project.