Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

October 30, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of War
Department of War
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth,

We write in support of the Department of War's Autonomous Warfare Command (AUTOWARCOM) proposal, and to recommend that the combatant command be headquartered in North Carolina. North Carolina hosts an expansive defense industrial base, innovative research institutes and universities, strategic terrain, and well-equipped military installations; home to some of our nation's top warfighters. Our delegation has consistently emphasized North Carolina's unique ability to contribute to missions of national importance, and our state continues to deliver to this end.

North Carolina's military installations, including Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune, have already emerged as national leaders in the integration of emerging technologies and advanced weapons systems into the force. Fort Bragg is home to expeditionary forces, including the XVIII Airborne Corps, which executes the Scarlet Dragon and the Sandhills Project exercises alongside industry to advance autonomous, attritable mass capabilities, and the new Joint Innovation Outpost. At Camp Lejeune, Marines conducted the Marine Corps' first live-fire test of lethal drone munitions in July 2025 and now train units on first-person-view attack drones.

In addition to the cutting-edge training conducted by the XVIII Airborne Corps and the Marines at Camp Lejeune, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base and Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point also contribute to the state's robust military presence, providing North Carolina with a diverse community of combat aviators. This, coupled with the U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, is demonstrative of the state's elite community of tacticians, trained to execute at the highest levels.

Further, North Carolina has a robust industry presence and startup ecosystem already developing autonomous systems for the military and commercial sectors alike. Companies across the state are working to design, develop, manufacture, and test autonomous systems—often partnering with North Carolina's top-flight universities and research institutions. The state's diverse and strategic terrain, including the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Sandhills region, and the

coastal Atlantic region, offer unique testing locations equipped to simulate a variety of fighting conditions.

North Carolina has the warfighters, the industry, and the research base to make AUTOWARCOM successful from day one. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Ted Budd
United States Senator

Donald G. Davis
Member of Congress

Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress

Pat Harrigan
Member of Congress

Mark Harris
Member of Congress

Richard Hudson
Member of Congress

Brad Knott
Member of Congress

Addison P. McDowell
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Tim Moore
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Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
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Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress