29 January 2014

RE: Request for Information: "Impact of Air Force Office of
      Scientific Research (AFOSR) Location"

To Whom It May Concern,

I am responding on behalf of the IEEE-USA to a Request for Information issued 24 January 2014 concerning the "Impact of Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR) Location.

IEEE-USA believes that the proposal to move the AFOSR has a significant potential to negatively impact its basic research portfolio and therefore would have a significant impact (#4) on our organization's confidence in the Air Force's ability to manage basic research. The reasons for this belief were outlined in my 13 Jan. 2014 letter to Gen. Wolfenbarger, Air Force Material Command, and can be summarized as follows:

1) IEEE-USA believes that there is a high risk that relocation of the AFOSR would result in significant attrition of talent and disruption of that important research enterprise.

2) Because AFOSR supported researchers also typically also draw support from other Washington-based federal research agencies in addition to AFOSR, relocation of AFOSR from the Washington area would eliminate the ability to cost-share travel expenses for program review and sponsor visits, and result in higher travel costs and increased expenses for AFORS's programmatic operations.

3) IEEE-USA is also concerned that relocation of AFOSR in the current budget environment would result in disproportionate cuts to AFOSR research funding and/or cannibalization of the basic research budget administered by AFOSR for both the Air Force and Department of Defense.

IEEE-USA advances the public good and promotes the careers and public policy interests of more than 206,000 engineers, scientists and allied professionals who are U.S. members of IEEE. A copy of my letter to Gen. Wolfenbarger can be accessed on-line at: http://www.ieeeusa.org/policy/policy/2014/011314.pdf

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this input and to share our concerns.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Blank, Ph.D.
2014 President, IEEE-USA