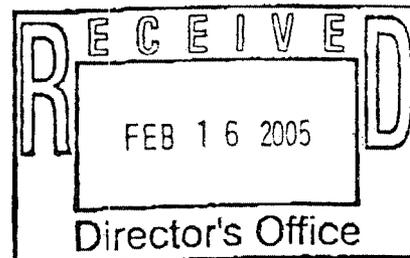




HALEY BARBOUR
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

February 15, 2005



The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

The State of Mississippi respectfully requests that the Department of Defense recommend in the 2005 Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) process the closure of the Mississippi Army Ammunition Plant (MSAAP) at Stennis Space Center in Hancock County, Mississippi. I believe that this action would be in the best interests of both the Department and the surrounding community.

MSAAP occupies 6,000 acres at NASA's Stennis Space Center through a long-term lease with NASA. Opened as a state-of-the-art ammunition plant in 1983, MSAAP was completely closed by 1990 and its 1,700 employees laid off – a huge economic impact for a small state like Mississippi. Interestingly, the abandoned plant never came up during the 1991, 1993, and 1995 BRAC rounds. Today, the Army has a contract with Mason Technologies Inc. (MTI) to maintain the facility and attract tenants. However, over half a million square feet of floor space in former Army facilities and 4,200 acres remain unused.

The State of Mississippi has actively worked as a principal force to bring new business to the MSAAP plant, including a Boeing RS-68 rocket engine assembly plant (a \$7 million state investment) and an IONATRON laser technology production facility (a \$2 million state commitment). In addition, NAVOCEANO, a NASA tenant, is using several of the old ammunition bunkers as secure data storage sites.

The MSAAP facilities can be more effectively utilized through more aggressive and responsive local control. In addition, this closure would ameliorate the need for the Army to continue to spend millions of dollars annually to hold on to an abandoned facility in growing disrepair. These cost savings alone are reason to close the facility through the BRAC process.

Further, I believe that greater economic redevelopment success for the unoccupied spaces could be achieved through more direct participation with the MSAAP property without the complications resulting from the continued involvement of the Army and, particularly, MTI. I understand that Stennis Space Center has previously requested transfer of a portion of the leased land back to NASA control but the Army has declined.

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Once the BRAC decisions are enacted into law, the state would like to support a process under which the Army would transfer the contract for maintaining the facilities to a local reuse authority to be designated by the Governor of the State of Mississippi. The Army would work in collaboration with the State of Mississippi, the local reuse authority, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) as represented by the Stennis Space Center to expeditiously transfer control of the leased land and facilities that comprise MSAAP. The parties would work in partnership with the Army to ensure that existing commitments to tenants are maintained and that issues involving costs for transitional property clean-up, maintenance, and ultimate environmental remediation are resolved.

Our people will be happy to work with the Army to develop a closure/transfer plan. I have assigned this responsibility for the State of Mississippi to the Mississippi Development Authority. The contact there for assistance is William S. Crawford, Deputy Director for Community Assistance, Mississippi Development Authority, P.O. Box 849 Jackson, MS 39205-0849. Tel: 601-359-6622. Email: WCrawford@Mississippi.org.

Thank you for considering this important request.

Sincerely,



Haley Barbour

cc: The Honorable Philip W. Grone
Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Installations and Environment
3400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-3400

*Enjoyed seeing you, if only briefly,
at Alpaha. Hope you're well. I appreciate
the job you're doing -*

