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May 25, 2005

BRAC COMMISSION
2521 SOUTH CLARK STREET SUITE 600
ARLINGTON VA 22202

Dear BRAC Commission:

I'd like to take the time to petition you to reconsider the proposed closure of Cannon AFB, NM. As a person who has a vested interest in Clovis as a community and Cannon as a place of employment, I'd like to state how important it is to re-look at Cannon as an excellent installation which currently has many attributes and future growth potential.

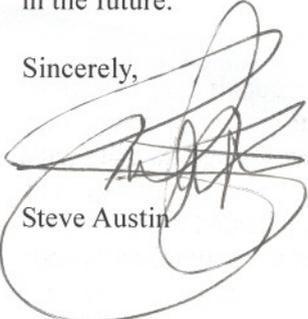
Looking at the criteria used to place bases on the closure list it is noted that Cannon does not fit the criteria. Having visited other bases like Luke AFB in Arizona, it is apparent that Cannon has an abundance of air space with no encroachment issues like similar (Luke) bases. In addition, the supersonic corridor offers enhanced capabilities which will benefit the DoD as ceiling and speed constraints limit real-life training opportunities at other installations. After living here for five years, I can honestly say that New Mexico has excellent weather which allows Cannon to have a very active flying program providing year round flying/training and a bombing range within minutes of take-off. Cannon has undergone a tremendous facelift since 2000 with many new facilities being constructed as well as a new tower. Ramp space is plentiful which allows Cannon to host joint exercises with room to grow, maybe room to accept a new airframe (FA-22) in the future. Cannon is definitely a first class operation winning many awards, one of which, is the coveted Daedalian for outstanding maintenance in 2004 amongst many others.

On a more personal level, the relationship between the community of Clovis and Cannon is a close one. I've noticed the base and the community grow closer after the events of 9/11. The appreciation for what the men and women of Cannon sacrifice is echoed throughout the residents of Clovis, Portales and West Texas. As a retiree, I plan to make Clovis my permanent home due to its "small town" feel. I know personally how important Cannon is to the economic security of the surrounding communities. Cannons remote location is both beneficial and a detriment... good for flying year around with no encroachment issues, but that same remoteness could also drastically affect the economic stability of Clovis and surrounding communities if Cannon should close. As a retiree, having no base to go to for healthcare, prescriptions and shopping will definitely affect all retirees who depend on services provided by the base as there is not another installation close by.

The community has embraced Cannon by purchasing land and donating it to the Air Force making Cannon a very appealing base for current and future flying requirements. This cements Clovis' commitment to keeping Cannon and future expansion for the Air Force and Clovis.

In closing I'd like to thank each member of the BRAC commission for listening to the members of the community of Clovis. We have a lot to offer, our relationship with Cannon is second too none! Please consider keeping Cannon open as we believe this base will continue to serve a valuable purpose now and in the future.

Sincerely,


Steve Austin

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