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June 10, 2005



Chairman Anthony J. Principi
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi and BRAC Commissioners:

I was upset by the Defense Department's recommendation to close Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve and Guard Base. This recommendation is a not in the nation's best interest and the BRAC Commission should reverse this decision and to remove Niagara Falls from the closure list.

It's no secret that closing the base would have a devastating economic impact on our region: The base is Niagara County's second-largest employer with more than 3,000 full- and part-time military and civilian and it has an estimated impact of \$150 million on regional businesses.

That said, it is also difficult to understand why the Air Force has decided to take planes, missions and jobs away from so many Air Guard and Air Reserve bases and put them on more costly Active Duty bases.

The media has reported that the military is facing significant challenges in recruiting during war time. As the only remaining major military installation in western New York, Niagara Falls has been key to military recruitment. The impact of this decision will be devastating to the New York Air National Guard and will make the Pentagon's efforts to recruit and retain military personnel even more difficult than it is now.

The Buffalo Niagara business community stands with the Niagara Falls/Western New York community in support of the Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve and Guard Base, and its retention. Overturn the Pentagon's recommendation and keep the base open.

Sincerely,

Sundra L. Ryce
President and CEO