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B.R.A.C. Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Re: Canon Air Force Base

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I was shocked to learn that Canon Air Force Base was placed on the preliminary base closing list. As a former Army dependent and a resident of a city that faced a similar fate many years ago, I can tell you that this would cause a variety of unintended consequences both locally and nationally.

Canon's Mission

First, with respect to Canon's mission, the existing facility and physical plant, airspace, and flight weather have served the country well, while providing a safe and useful training area for our pilots. Additionally, the location of the facility so close to BWTX Pantex, Bell Helicopter, and other facilities in the Amarillo area would seem to be a good thing.

Additionally, substantial infrastructure improvements have been made – it would be foolish for that investment to go to waste.

An Economic Disaster

The closing of any military facility can have dire consequences for a local community. For Clovis, this would be particularly acute – the phrase “economic disaster” is not an exaggeration.

We have essentially allowed a community to build up around Canon. Clovis owes much of its very existence, and a substantial bulk of its current economy, to Canon. Closure would have dire economic consequences, effectively wiping out a large portion of the economic and population base for Clovis. Bottom line: this will set Clovis back decades.

The consequences for Clovis would be so dire that it would have a ripple effect throughout Eastern New Mexico and the Texas Panhandle. First, there is nearby Portales.

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Portales is home to Eastern New Mexico University, which, like Clovis Community College, would be hard hit.

Additionally, Canon personnel and civilian Clovis residents are an integral part of the Amarillo community. They are served by our media outlets, they shop in our retail centers, and the Clovis civilian community relies upon the Amarillo and Lubbock medical communities. To reiterate, this closure would strike a horrific blow to Clovis, but it would also have very real, adverse effects as far away as Amarillo and Lubbock.

Intangibles

Finally, there are a variety of intangible benefits to a base like Canon. Canon's very existence allows this part of Eastern New Mexico and the Texas Panhandle to be a part of our nation's defense. Aside from the obvious security issues, over-centralization of our facilities in a smaller number of super-bases will only erode this fabric as more and more parts of the country will begin to feel a disconnect from being part of our national security. We simply do not need large swaths of our country to become disengaged from our national defense.

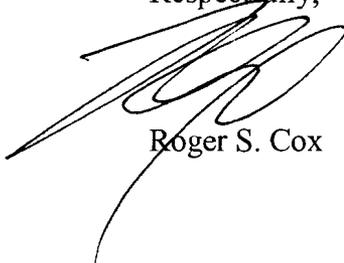
This is one of those unintended consequences that is impossible to quantify, but it is something that I assure you will develop over the years.

Summary

Many of us here in Amarillo (especially those of us who have lived through a base closure or have otherwise lived in military communities) hope that the Commission will see that the proposed closure of Canon is a very short-sighted step that may save our federal government a few dollars in the short run (even that is debatable), but will have drastic consequences for Clovis and its surrounding area for years (decades?) to come, while hurting our overall defense in the process.

Please consider the long-term ramifications for both the local economy and our national defense and do the smart thing – remove Canon from the proposed closure list.

Respectfully,



Roger S. Cox