

TIM JOHNSON
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United States Senate

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June 28, 2005

The Honorable James Bilbray
Commissioner
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioner Bilbray:

Thank you for your participation at the regional field hearing in Rapid City, and for your service to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. On a personal note, it was wonderful to see you, and I am pleased that you and your entire family are doing well.

As you discovered during your tour of Ellsworth Air Force Base, it is one of our country's premier military installations. In addition to its upgraded infrastructure, Ellsworth also benefits from an ideal location and does not suffer from encroachment issues confronting many other bases. And as the people of Rapid City so ably demonstrated, community support for Ellsworth is unmatched.

Furthermore, consolidating the entire B-1 fleet at one installation is not prudent military strategy. As the backbone of our bomber fleet, the B-1s are integral to protecting our country from threats at home and abroad. Stationing all the bombers at one base will make the fleet an inviting target for terrorist threats and natural disasters.

Thank you again for your service to our country. As you begin your deliberations in the coming weeks, I know that you will give careful consideration to removing Ellsworth from the proposed base closure list. In the meantime, if you have any questions, or if I can be of further assistance, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Tim Johnson
U.S. Senate

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June 28, 2005

The Honorable Samuel Skinner
Commissioner
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioner Skinner:

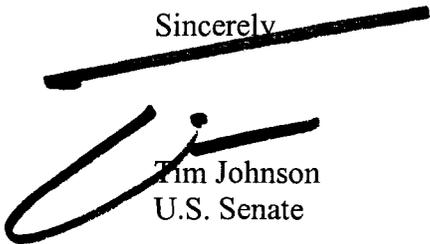
Thank you for your participation at the regional field hearing in Rapid City, and for your service to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. I am sure you would agree that Ellsworth and the local communities made an indelible impression.

As you discovered during your tour of Ellsworth Air Force Base, it is one of our country's premier military installations. In addition to its upgraded infrastructure, Ellsworth also benefits from an ideal location and does not suffer from encroachment issues confronting many other bases. And as the people of Rapid City so ably demonstrated, community support for Ellsworth is unmatched.

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Sincerely,



Tim Johnson
U.S. Senate