



DALE M. VOLKER  
59TH DISTRICT

CHAIRMAN  
COMMITTEE ON CODES  
VICE CHAIRMAN  
MAJORITY CONFERENCE

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY 12247

July 14, 2005

PLEASE RESPOND

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ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247  
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DISTRICT OFFICE:

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ROOM 103  
WARSAW, NEW YORK 14569  
585-786-5048

Mr. Anthony Principi, Chairman  
BRAC Commission  
c/o NIMAC  
P.O. Box 231  
Niagara Falls, NY 14304-0231

Dear Chairman Principi and BRAC Commissioners:

New York State Senator Michael Balboni, New York State Assemblywoman RoAnn Destito, and myself, New York State Senator Dale M. Volker are deeply troubled by the Defense Department's recommendation to close the Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve Base. As Chairpersons of the State Senate and State Assembly Committees which are deeply involved and responsible for New York State's Homeland Security programs and initiatives, this recommendation would be a terrible mistake for the citizens of New York and our nation. We urge the BRAC Commission to reverse your decision and remove the Niagara Falls Base from the list.

Since the September 11th attacks on our nation and state, the State Legislature, working in collaboration with Governor George E. Pataki, has been at the forefront in fully supporting and funding a myriad of proactive security measures to thwart and react to any potential terrorist acts from foreign terrorist groups. Many of our state's Homeland Security programs utilize a cooperative protocol between state, local, and federal domestic law enforcement and intelligence agencies. This is especially important as it has been recently reported that New York's neighbor to the north has publicly stated that Canadian intelligence officials believe at least 50 terror groups have some presence there. These terrorist groups range from Sri Lanka, Kurdistan and points between and include supporters of some of the best-known Mideast groups, including al-Qaida.

Considering the potential incursion of potential terrorists entities coming in from abroad, we are unsure and troubled as to 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. We firmly believe that it would be extremely detrimental to national and state Homeland Security interests, and jeopardize the enormous strides taken to protect and secure our borders.

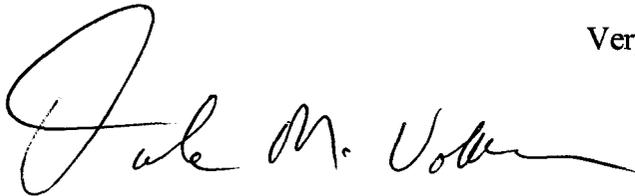
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Over the past several years, the federal government has invested more than 35 million dollars in Niagara Falls. Since 1995 new facilities, and Base Operations Support costs have been reduced more than 33% (to include a 25% reduction in utilities) to make the base one of the most cost-efficient facilities in the Air Force Reserve Command.

Additionally, the potential closure of the base eliminates the ability to recruit and retain New Yorkers in a region in which the units have both maintained in excess of 100% manning rates. It is also noteworthy to include the fact that Niagara Falls' existing infrastructure can accommodate eight (8) additional C-130H model aircraft without any military construction. Niagara Falls faces no physical encroachment nor air traffic control constraints and has acreage on the base and adjacent to the installation for expansion.

We respectfully urge the Commission, in the strongest possible terms, to remove the Niagara Falls AFB from the Pentagon's recommended list of base closures and to stop the continuing retreat of the military from our region of the country.

Very truly yours,



Senator Dale M. Volker  
Chairman of the Senate Committee on Criminal and Civil Codes



Senator Michael A.L. Balboni  
Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs



Assemblywoman RoAnn M. Destito  
Chairwoman of the Assembly Committee on Governmental Operations,

DMV:cjm