

Mid-Willamette Valley Mayors Coalition
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The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman, Base Realignment & Closure Commission
Polk Building, Suite 600 & 625
2521 South Clark Street
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Chairman Principi,

We, the undersigned members of the Mid-Willamette Valley Mayors Coalition, consisting of 33 cities throughout Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties, would like to express grave concern about a recent Department of Defense recommendation to the BRAC Commission to relocate the 142nd Fighter Wing's F-15 aircraft from Portland, Oregon, to New Orleans and Atlantic City. We believe this recommendation creates a potential life-threatening circumstance by neglecting the mission of Homeland Security. The following facts clearly demonstrate why this recommendation places the Pacific Northwest and western United States at risk.

First, the 142nd Fighter Wing protects our homeland with the F-15 Eagle jet fighter. The fighter wing's present position in Portland is geographically strategic, providing both continuous air defense and air superiority from northern California to Canada. This is part of the 24-hour continuous alert North American Air defense (NORAD) system. No other base in the Pacific Northwest covers this range, and without it we are at risk.

Second, intelligence reports consistently reveal Al-Qaida and its franchise terrorist cells are continuing to probe our aviation resources as sources of effective weaponry. Most of the major routes for airlines operating between Asia and North America traverse West Coast airspace, with many departures at international airports heavily "fuel loaded" for long flights. Reflecting back to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and proactively utilizing current intelligence information, it would be nothing short of woeful negligence not to maintain a dedicated air defense fighter wing to provide logistic and operational support to an alert mission in protection of the western United States.

Finally, the citizens of the Pacific Northwest and northern California deserve the same protection afforded the eastern United States. This decrease in air defense capability, coupled with known current threats and the likelihood of widely dispersed multiple targets, presents an appealing and potentially successful opportunity for terrorists. Realistically, the 142nd Fighter Wing's homeland defense mission is more critical now than ever before.

As previously stated, the recommendation made by the Department of Defense to relocate vital air defense capability degrades Homeland Security in the Pacific Northwest and the entire nation. This cannot and should not be ignored. We believe that a maximum effort must be generated to change this recommendation, and we strongly urge your support and leadership in this effort.

Thank you for your help and consideration in keeping the Pacific Northwest and the United States safe.

Respectfully yours,

Thomas McCain
Thomas McCain, City of Hubbard

Ken Hector
Ken Hector, City of Silverton

Janet Taylor
Janet Taylor, City of Salem

James B. Fairchild
James B. Fairchild, City of Dallas

Kathie J. Oriet
Kathie J. Oriet, City of Carlton

Kathy Figley
Kathy Figley, City of Woodburn

Bob Wiro
Bob Wiro, City of Amity

Kathy Connor
Kathy Connor, City of St. Paul

Jeff Skeeters
Jeff Skeeters, City of Idanha

John McArdle
John McArdle, City of Independence

Thomas C. Bauman
Mayor, City of Mt. Angel

Randy Murphy
Randy Murphy, City of Yamhill

Carly Spainhower
Carly Spainhower, City of Turner

Jackie Brons
Jackie Brons, City of Dayton

C. Diane Ragsdale
C. Diane Ragsdale, City of Dundee

Bill Carr
Bill Carr, City of Aurora

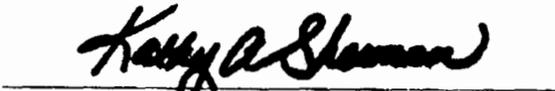
Michael Myers
Michael Myers, City of Jefferson

Harold White
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Robert V. Stewart
Robert V. Stewart, City of Newberg

Edward J. Gormley
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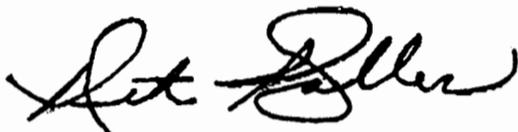

Kathy A. Sherman, City of Gates


Roger West, City of Gervais


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