

THE HONORABLE JIM SAXTON

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TO: Chairman Principi c/o Deirdre Walsh

FAX#: 703-699-2735

FROM: MICHAEL J. SILVESTRO, MILITARY LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT

RE: Deirdre - Could you please ensure that Mr. Principi receives this? Thank you very much!

This is the first of 3 pages.
 If there are any problems with this facsimile, please contact the number above.

JIM SAXTON
THIRD DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY
WWW.HOUSE.GOV/SAXTON
JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN
RESOURCES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEES:
FISHERIES AND OCEANS
NATIONAL PARKS



ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEES:
TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL
THREATS AND CAPABILITIES
CHAIRMAN
PROJECTION FORCES
MILITARY PERSONNEL

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

August 22, 2005

The Honorable Anthony Principi
Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

While reading Representative Murtha's August 12th correspondence voicing his dissent for the Department of Defense's BRAC recommendation to relocate the Marine Corps HMLA-775 Det A, I noticed several incorrect assertions about McGuire Air Force Base (MAFB). Although I have already briefed you and your staff on the reality of these topics, I feel I would be remiss if I did not set the record straight on those issues cited that pertain to military value and mission capability one last time.

The dissent begins by stating that MAFB "likely will have insufficient space when KC-135s are not retired" as a main reason for overturning the Department of Defense's recommendation. Aside from the presumptuous statement that "there will not be retirements of KC-135s", the assessment of the space available at MAFB is simply incorrect. As I demonstrated during the July 8th Regional Hearing, the area currently occupied by the 108th ARW has enough space to fit 12 KC-135s and 100% of the assets assigned in the BRAC recommendation on the ground at the same time. As I have also discussed, additional ramp space is available on MAFB just outside the 108th ARW's area. Furthermore, when the joint base is looked at holistically, neighboring Fort Dix and Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst have ample amounts of buildable acreage that more than satisfy the requirements of the BRAC recommendations.

Next, the letter incorrectly categorizes MAFB as "a facility that has airspace, encroachment, and other issues" and alleges that the "McGuire military complex has serious encroachment problems." As I previously testified before you and your commission, nothing could be further from the truth.

First, the Joint bases form 42,000 acres of contiguous DoD land that is surrounded by 1,217,800 acres of protected land. This land is undeveloped and will remain so because it consists of state owned land, pinelands designated property, and land included in the county farmland preservation program. Thus, not only is the base unencroached today; it is protected from future encroachment.

Second, while MAFB is located in an area of high air traffic, the conclusion that the "area already has crowded airspace, and bringing in more air units will only worsen the problem" is incorrect. Recently, Mr. Ed Spring, who is a former FAA executive that worked as Chief Controller (Air Traffic Manager) of Philadelphia International Airport and Manager of the FAA

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The Honorable Anthony Principi
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Eastern Region's air traffic division, studied the air traffic issues relating to MAFB. The findings of this study, which I also previously provided to you and your commission, determined the following:

- 1) The high volume of air traffic does not adversely impact the mission
- 2) The current air traffic could be tripled without additional staffing or resources
- 3) Adding the aircrafts assigned in the Department of Defense's BRAC recommendation will have no significant impact

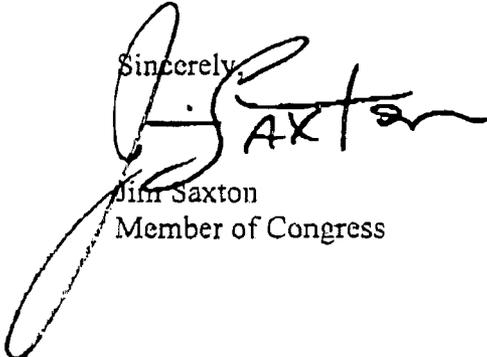
Lastly, the statement that "McGuire's firing range has been shut down (and likely can't reopen because of encroachment and surrounding high-density population areas)" is also based on faulty information. In addition to MAFB's close proximity to Fort Indiantown Gap, Quantico, and Camp Lejeune, MAFB has ample training space available within New Jersey. Currently, neighboring Fort Dix has aerial gunnery range capability that meets all Marine Corps qualification standards with the exception of Tow gunnery tables. In fact, for many years the marine attack helicopters utilized these ranges to perform their training. However, due to an ongoing parking apron and joint taxiway upgrade project, this training was temporarily affected. The planned completion of this project is November 2005 and will increase the previous training capability of the area. Additionally, the Warren Grove live fire range, which is located approximately 35 miles south of the base, currently provides aerial firing training to both fixed wing and rotary aircraft. Therefore, placing these assets at MAFB places them closer to their training areas and decreases their associated training costs.

For the reasons provided in this letter, in my discussions with you and your staff, and the analysis furnished by the Department of Defense, I believe that moving the HMLA-775 Det A along with the assets recommended to move from Willow Grove is the right decision. Relocating these valuable Marine assets from a regional airport to a joint military installation provides increased security and enhanced joint capabilities.

As I previously demonstrated, McGuire AFB is a unique joint base in a prime location that does not suffer from encroachment or significant air traffic congestion. The base has more than the requisite space to accept all of the units recommended by the Department of Defense and the recommendations make sense both fiscally and militarily.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jim Saxton
Member of Congress

JS/ms

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEES:

TERRORISM, UNCONVENTIONAL
THREATS AND CAPABILITIES
CHAIRMAN

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BRAC Commission
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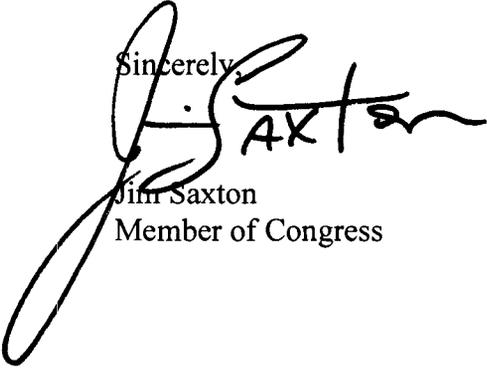
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