



STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

AUG 17 2005

Received

RUTH ANN MINNER
GOVERNOR

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Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 S. Clark Street
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Arlington, VA 22202-3920

Dear BRAC Commissioners:

As the BRAC Commission finalizes its deliberations for the 2005 BRAC round, I want to provide additional thoughts on the future of the National Guard, focusing on its dual role of protecting the homeland and our hometowns. By now, the BRAC Commission has gathered data, held hearings, and visited bases to determine the best course forward. This analysis has produced complex discussions and a myriad of possibilities regarding the structure and future missions of not only the New Castle County Air Guard Station in Delaware, but Air Guard squadrons across our nation.

The following principles are provided to you as a reminder of the strong partnership between states and their National Guard. They are especially critical in the event your recommendations provide guidance for future deliberations between the Department of Defense and the states, as they will protect the dual mission of the National Guard provided to us in the Constitution.

- Ensure that each state retains a flying mission. Lt. General Blum pledged this to each Governor and it is imperative that the BRAC Commission and the Department of Defense allow for its realization. Airframes in each state will ensure adequate response times for essential personnel and equipment and aid in recruitment and retention of Air Guard men and women.
- Require consultation with Governors and their Adjutants General. The current BRAC process underscores the necessity for the states to be active participants at the table during discussions about the National Guard. Any future deliberations by the DoD or NBG must be inclusive of the Commanders in Chief of the state militias to ensure a balance is struck between federal and state missions.

- Guarantee retention of critical state missions. Supporting homeland security and emergency management are cornerstones of the National Guard's state role. Essential personnel such as firefighters and medical personnel are critical assets to each state's ability to respond to emergencies. The DoD chose to not consult with DHS or the governors regarding homeland security implications. This is an error that should be remedied in short order.

Following these principles will allow for the retention of the 166th Airlift Wing, the Delaware Air National Guard Fire Department, and the 142nd Aero Medical Evacuation Squadron at the New Castle County Air Guard Station. Consistent with the information provided to you by Delaware's public officials, first responders, and constituents, these squadrons are essential for Delaware and the Mid-Atlantic's economy and safety.

The BRAC Commission, as you have stated, is prepared to act decisively. It is my hope that the final decision will be the right decision for our nation's hometown force – the state militias – to continue into the 21st century with an eye to the skies and boots on the ground to provide not only for America's common defense, but also employ the capability to respond with airlift, fire protection, and rescue capability in the event of a natural or manmade disaster.

As we enter into the final stage of this BRAC round, I want to reiterate my gratitude for your transparent deliberation process. My staff stands ready to provide you with any final data you may require to render a final decision. If you would like to discuss this issue further, please contact me directly or the Adjutant General of the Delaware National Guard, General Frank Vavala (302-326-7001).

Sincerely,



Ruth Ann Minner
Governor