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TO: Chairman Principi FAX #: 703-699-2735

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DATE: 23 Aug 2005

RE: _____

FROM:

- The Honorable Thelma Drake
- Tom Gordy, Chief of Staff
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- Tyler Brown, Press Assistant
- Mike Cosio, Military Legislative Assistant
- Carric Melvin, Legislative Assistant
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THELMA D. DRAKE
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE
WORKFORCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON 21ST CENTURY COMPETITIVENESS
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HOUSE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4602

23 August 2005

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The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman, Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Chairman:

First, let me commend you and your fellow commissioners on your diligent efforts over the past four months to determine the facility and installation needs of our military for the next decade.

As you prepare for final deliberations, I would like to reiterate my concerns about two particular bases, both of which reside in my congressional district - Ft. Monroe and Naval Air Station Oceana.

In regards to Ft. Monroe, I am very concerned that the initial estimates according to the Department of Defense to close Ft. Monroe do not include the costs for environmental restoration. Ft. Monroe is approximately 180 years old and is a very historical military facility. Throughout its history, the handling of unexploded ordnance and other hazardous materials was not conducted in a safe and environmentally sensitive manner.

As a result, clean up is estimated to cost between \$200 million for clean up to military usage standards, and \$1.36 billion for complete environmental restoration. Details on these projections can be found at http://www.hampton.va.us/brac/files/brac_article.pdf.

Given the fact that, if closed, the land mostly reverts back to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the land cannot be sold in order to recoup money for restoration costs. Also, merely cleaning the base to military usage standards is unacceptable. Further costs will include historic preservation of the fort.

Given the substantial costs associated with environmental restoration, it does not seem the closure of Fort Monroe will accomplish the intended goal of BRAC, which is to present a net savings for the Department of Defense. Therefore, I urge you to reconsider the closure of Fort Monroe.

The Commission's deliberations regarding Naval Air Station Oceana also greatly concern me. Before and since July 20, when the Commission voted to add Oceana for

consideration, the City of Virginia Beach and the Commonwealth of Virginia have worked to address encroachment around Oceana. Concrete steps that have been taken thus far include the Joint Land Use Study, the agreement to purchase the Near Post property, and the city's drafting of a new AICUZ Overlay Ordinance to implement the policies of the Joint Land Use Study.

Oceana's military value is high, and this is derived using information regarding the impact on training by encroachment. It ranks fifth of all air stations.

Oceana provides essential capabilities for National Command Authority activities, capabilities that cannot be replicated elsewhere.

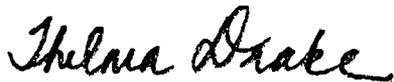
Oceana has the complete support of the Navy. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Mullen, along with Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England, have reiterated their strong desire to keep Oceana as the Navy's East Coast Master Jet Base and have unequivocally stated that no other facility provides a better alternative than Oceana.

Finally, it will cost hundreds of millions of dollars, possibly billions, to turn Cecil Commerce Park into a jet base. This is money the Navy doesn't have to spend on a base it doesn't need.

The facts dictate that Oceana should remain open to support our naval tactical aircraft. I hope you will support Oceana during your upcoming deliberations.

Thank you again for your service and commitment to our military and national security.

Sincerely,



Thelma Drake
MC