

**WEST LONG BRANCH
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
14 Baker Dr. PO Box 364
West Long Branch, NJ 07764



Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 South Clark Street Suite 600
Arlington, Virginia 22202

06162005

Gentlemen:

The West Long Branch Chamber of Commerce wishes to add its voice to those citizens who have serious concerns regarding the proposed closing of Fort Monmouth.

Fort Monmouth has a high level of professional expertise within its boundaries that will be lost if the Fort closes. It would be replaced with less experienced individuals that will take years to acquire the knowledge that will be drained off by this closing. In addition, the level of technology now available will not be easily replaced. The time it would take to retrain and replace the important functions of the Fort is time we cannot now afford to waste. We are at war. This is not a time to implement decisions which will impede our success during a military action.

Also, the location of Fort Monmouth must be considered. The area between New York and Washington D. C. is a prime target for terrorist activity and Fort Monmouth could, if necessary, become a mobilization base that could assist our State should an attack occur in either area. Therefore, the homeland security contributions and potential for assistance must be weighed very heavily. The location of Fort Monmouth due to its proximity to New York was integral to the response and recovery efforts following the September 11th attack.

The affect the closing would have on businesses in our community also should be considered. The banking establishments, automobile service industry, restaurants, food markets, retail establishments, sporting facilities, medical services, personal services, etc. all stand to lose the business of Fort Monmouth personnel and the personnel of the spin off industries relating to Fort business.

The loss of Fort Monmouth would leave this resort area more heavily dependent on the resort industry which is always in a state of flux and dependent on weather conditions. Our community, and those around us, cannot afford to lose the stability of the business generated by Fort Monmouth anymore than the Department of Defense and the Homeland Security Agency can afford to lose the benefits of Fort Monmouth.

Therefore, we support all efforts to keep Fort Monmouth open. Our community and the country at large cannot afford the loss of the contributions made by Fort Monmouth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Ann Valenzano".

Ann Valenzano, President
West Long Branch Chamber of Commerce