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Ms. Lilah Gainey
412 East 18th St..
Portales, New Mexico 88130

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The Honorable James H. Bilbray,

I am very concerned about the BRAC Commission's decision to close Cannon Air Force Base in Clovis New Mexico. I believe the commission should reconsider this decision

Cannon offers unique services not only to our area, but also to our national defense. These services include an abundance of air space and no encroachment issues, a bombing range (previously owned by local private citizens) that is only seconds away, the airspace to fly supersonic speeds, and ideal year-round training weather, among many others.

The interaction between Cannon AFB and the communities of Portales and Clovis is very positive. Citizens in both towns and counties have great pride in Cannon and the service it provides for our nation's defense. Land in Curry and Roosevelt Counties was purchased by the communities and given back to the Air Force for additional housing and installation of instrument lighting on the alternate runway at the base. Additionally, the interaction of Cannon personnel with the community as a whole, the schools, service clubs, etc. gives opportunities to instill pride and respect in the hearts of our youth for our nation and our military. These positive values cannot be reinforced by civilians to the extent that the presence and interaction with the military provides..

The entire area, including towns 100 miles in every direction, is home to a large military retiree population. These retirees rely on Cannon for healthcare, grocery shopping and more. There is not another installation close by to serve the retired military who were stationed at Cannon and felt the active support provided by Portales and Clovis enough to want to spend the rest of their lives in the area.

As a professional employee of Eastern New Mexico Universtiy, I know that the closure of Cannon Air Force Base will adversely affect the education of the local citizens, including the public schools, Clovis Community College and ENMU. The negative economic impact is not even able to be calculated at this point in time, but it will be considerable.

Please reconsider all the facts before making your final decision.

Respectfully yours,

Lilah Gainey

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