

TOWN OF NIAGARA

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HARVEY N. ALBOND, AICP
TOWN MANAGER
June 6, 2005

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

Dear Chairman Principi and BRAC Commissioners,

As the Planner Emeritus of Upstate New York, I would like to advise you to consider some important planning factors that may have been overlooked in the Defense Department's recommendations.

Others will forward to you representations concerning the economic impact of closing a base. I may assume that not many will give you concerns regarding the impacts of enlarging a base to permit what may arguably be the benefits of consolidation. In many respects the concerns are the same. To absorb new industry, the same community resources must be augmented that suffer with a closing. The waste of local, state and federal resources as a result of a closing will also require the allocation of similar funding from local, state and federal governments and programs to accommodate the relocation. This does not cancel out but actually compounds the waste.

In considering the impact of closing upon local economies, the measurements tend to be in current terms. No consideration is complete unless they can be evaluated in a proper historical perspective. In the instance of the closing of the Niagara Falls Air Base, one should look at the history of Niagara's economy.

With the advent of the Electric Age and the development of Alternating Current at Niagara Falls, the City of Niagara Falls became the fastest growing city in New York State. Home of the carbon products and electro-chemical industries, with the most famous of now international companies such as Union Carbide, Carborundum, DuPont, Olin, Occidental, Pittsburgh Metallurgical, Great Lakes Carbon, to name but a few companies originating or having major plants here.

Commencing with the loss of the original power plant in 1956, where alternate current electricity was first mass produced and transmitted, there has been an exodus of some 37,000 manufacturing jobs. The population of Niagara Falls has decreased from 101,000 to an estimated 50,000 today.

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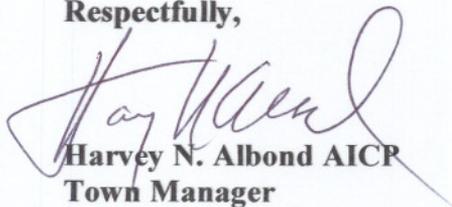
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The Niagara Falls Airbase is not only a major employer in today's local economy. It is the foundation upon which the Niagara Falls International Airport rests. Without the contributions the Airbase makes and constitutes for the airport such as Fire and Security, snow plowing, weather and air control services, capital investment in runway construction and maintenance, there simply could not and would not be an airport. The airport represents to many the most important factor and opportunity in the economy of the Niagara Region today and in the future.

Finally, I would urge you to consider the International aspects of this Airbase. It permits us to meet present and future obligations to Canada with the very heartland of the Canadian economy, metropolitan Toronto, virtually at our door steps.

It is my hope that I have given you some new information overlooked in the Department of Defense's recommendations that will help you modify the list and retain the Niagara Falls Airbase. I remain available to you at any time should you desire to meet with me.

Respectfully,



**Harvey N. Albond AICP
Town Manager**