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

Dear Chairman Principi and BRAC Commissioners:

The Buffalo Niagara region was recently hit hard by the news that the United States Department of Defense, through its Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC), had recommended the Niagara Falls Air Force Base for Closure. In our opinion, this recommendation is not in the nation's best interest and the BRAC Commission should reserve this decision and remove Niagara Falls from the closure list.

It is no secret that closing the base would have a devastating economic impact on our region: The base is Niagara County's second-largest employer with more than 3,000 full and part-time military and civilian employees and it has an estimated impact of \$150 million on regional businesses.

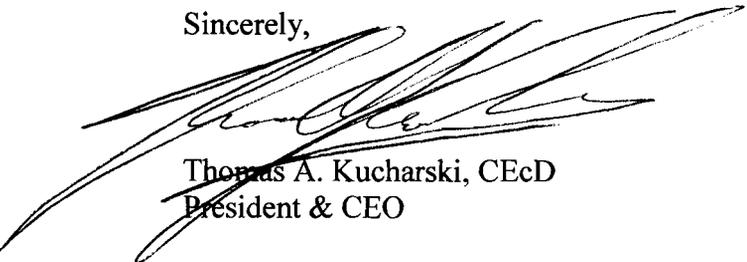
The base is also potentially a key to attraction of a commercial air facility in Niagara Falls in the future. The base's existing infrastructure can accommodate eight additional aircrafts without any military construction, Niagara Falls faces no physical encroachment nor air traffic control constraints and has acreage on and adjacent to the base installation for expansion.

Since 1995, \$35 million has been invested in new facilities and lengthened runways, which have led to improved operational effectiveness. The facility has also reduced its Base Operations Support costs by 33% (this includes a 25% reduction in utilities) to make this base one of the most cost-efficient facilities in the Air Force Reserve Command.

The media has reported that the military is facing significant challenges in recruiting. As the only remaining major military installation in Western New York, Niagara Falls has been key to military recruitment. The impact of this decision will be devastating to the New York Air National Guard and will make the Pentagon's efforts to recruit and retain military personnel even more difficult than it is now.

The good news is that the decision to close the Niagara Falls base is not yet final. The Buffalo Niagara business community stands with the Niagara Falls/Western New York community in support of the Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve and Guard Base, and its retention. I urge you to overturn the Pentagon's recommendation and keep the base open for years to come.

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Kucharski, CEcD
President & CEO