

Jennifer Walowitz
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June 14, 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:

I was surprised and disappointed by the Defense Department's recommendation to close Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve base. This decision is not in the best interest of our nation and must be reversed.

Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve base is critical to our homeland defense and national security. Since it is located near four major border crossings between the U.S. and Canada, the base is in a position to play a key role in homeland defense.

The men and women of the 914th Airlift Wing and the 107th Air Refueling Wing have been instrumental in fighting the war on terror overseas. If the base closes, the ability to recruit and retain New Yorkers will be eliminated. Since both units currently maintain in excess of 100% manning rates, this would significantly decrease the number of military personnel available to serve our country.

In addition, Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve base is a major contributor to the economy in Western New York. As the second largest employer in Niagara county, it has over 3000 full- and part-time workers. The closure of the base would be a devastating financial loss to the area.

It is imperative for the base to remain operational to provide homeland defense, national security, and economic support to Western New York. Please disregard the Defense Department's recommendation and keep Niagara Falls Air Force Reserve base open.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Walowitz".

Jennifer Walowitz