

May 27, 2005

The Honorable Samuel K. Skinner
BRAC Commission
2521 South Clark Street
Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

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Dear Commissioner Skinner:

I am very concerned about the Department of Defense's recommendation that Cannon Air Force Base should be closed.

I want to help make the Commission fully aware of the unique attributes that Cannon offers to our national defense. These include unencroached airspace suitable for training at supersonic speed, many new and existing facilities suitable for joint training exercises, and a low-cost environment that promotes cost-efficient training. Cannon is a real asset to the country's armed forces.

Whether or not Cannon's military value has been recognized yet in Washington, out here we really appreciate the base. The local community has been uniquely supportive, donating time and land to promote the base's needs. We have also welcomed the personnel.

The many veterans in the area make it clear that they feel at home here. We consider Cannon and its retirees a part of our family.

The closure of Cannon will also have a devastating impact on our economy. It has been estimated that the area will lose at least 20 percent of its workforce, a percentage out of line with the effect of base closings in other communities. Cannon is critical for us.

I invite you to come personally to the Cannon hearing in Clovis. I ask you please to reconsider Cannon's importance to the nation and to my community. Please, let us KEEP CANNON!

Sincerely,



Paul R Heath
USAF Retiree
109 Tucker Ave
Clovis N.M. 88101

PS. On a personal note,

I am one of the retirees (USAF) in this community and I use the base very often for my wife and my own needs. My job, my wife's job, my daughters' jobs and my son-in-laws' jobs will be very much affected by the closing of Cannon. Some of the schools my grandkids attend will be last. We have many companies that want to come into our community but will not because of the closing. Please think hard on this issue. WE NEED CANNON! Clovis, Portales, Eastern New Mexico, West Texas (including Amarillo and Lubbock) are home to a large military retiree population. All of us retirees rely on Cannon Air Force Base for healthcare, grocery shopping, and more. There is not another installation close by to serve our retired military needs.

In summary, the Clovis, Portales and surrounding communities have reached out and supported Cannon Air Force Base like no other community over the last 50 years. We've done so financially, morally, spiritually and above all consistently.