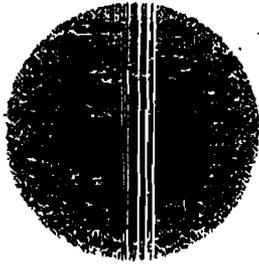


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NIAGARA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
5467 Upper Mountain Road, Suite 100
Lockport, New York 14094-1894

PAULETTE M. KLINE, R.N., M.Ed., M.P.H.
Public Health Director

(716) 439-7435
(716) 439-7440 Fax

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June 24, 2005

Chairman Anthony Principi
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street
Suite 100
Arlington, Virginia, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi and BRAC Commissioners:

Recently, the Niagara County Department of Health received a request from the Niagara Falls Air and Guard Base that their public health officer receive training in all aspects of local public health through the Niagara County Department of Health to increase surge capacity for Homeland Security.

Since President Bush issued Presidential Decision Directive 8: National Preparedness (HSPD-8) on December 17, 2003, we have accelerated our local efforts in Niagara County to assess our risks, vulnerabilities and capacities to prepare and respond to large-scale emergencies and threats to the health and security of our local and regional communities. The airbase has been an integral planning partner in our local and regional efforts as we have incorporated the DHS prescribed capabilities-based planning process to build up our critical capacity for homeland security. Airbase partner representatives sit on these committees and more: Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), Health Emergency Alert and Response Team (HEART) and Medical Reserve Corp (MRC). Moreover, the Niagara Falls Air Base and Guard partners are written into our local, municipal, county, regional, public health and cross-border emergency plans.

As you know, inter-agency coordination is absolutely essential to build response capacities and to mitigate large-scale emergencies. A recent gap analysis of our county demonstrates the need for continued partnership with the Niagara Falls Air and Guard Base. The following illustrates how the air base contributes to strategic security and serves to augment readiness and critical response capacities:

- Aviation support for domestic and cross-border security incidents
- Secure land and air transport support for release and dissemination of federal pharmaceutical and medical assets
- Support for mass prophylaxis and vaccination
- Fire and HAZMAT support
- Emergency Medical and Public Health System support
- Technology and Communications infrastructure support
- Emergency Preparedness Training and exercises
- Disaster Recovery

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- Ordnance coordination support
- Resource coordination and support
- Civil support
- Environmental agent detection
- Environmental Health and support
- Support for maintaining continuity of government operations
- Point of contact for any federal response strategies

Closure of the Niagara Falls Air and Guard Base would have a wide-ranging deleterious effect on the homeland security and economic stability of Niagara County and the surrounding region. To ensure public health safety of our citizenry, based on the threat status determined for Niagara County by the Department of Homeland Security, we implore you to reverse this decision.

Respectfully yours,

Steve Lewis, D.V.M., President,
Niagara County Board of Health

Paulette M. Kline, R.N., M.Ed., M.P.H.
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Public Health Director