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June 14, 2005

BRAC Commission
Washington D.C.
c/o NIMAC; P.O. Box 231
Niagara Falls, New York 14304-0231

Dear Commissioners:

The Pentagon has recommended to the BRAC that the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station in Niagara Falls, New York be closed. As Niagara County's second largest employer with over 3,000 full and part-time workers, this would deliver yet another devastating blow to our region's economy. In addition to the financial concerns, the community pride for our past and present military contributions can not be understated. The base site lies within close proximity to four major border crossings between the U.S. and Canada, along with the New York State Power Authority's Hydropower Complex which supplies substantial power to the Northeast United States Power Grid. The size and location of the base would also allow it to be used for responses to natural disasters or terror attacks in the Northeast United States. While the base serves as a logistical backbone for the War on Terror, it is also strategically placed and fully expandable. It should be expanded rather than closed.

According to the Niagara Military Affairs Council:

- Closure of Niagara would reduce the Air Force presence in NY by 40%, and eliminate the *last* Federal Air Force flying mission in the State. Since 1995, Niagara has been modernized with \$35M in new facilities and lengthened runways which have improved the operational effectiveness of the wings.
- We have also reduced our Base Operations Support costs by not less than 33% (to include a 25% reduction in utilities) to make the base one of the most cost-efficient facilities in the Air Force Reserve Command.
- Closure of the base would also eliminate the ability to recruit and retain New Yorkers in a region in which the units have both maintained in excess of 100% manning rates.
- Niagara Falls existing infrastructure can accommodate 8 additional C-130H model aircraft without any military construction.

According to the Buffalo News article on May 25, 2005:

Top Air Force officials relied on their "collective judgment" in deciding to recommend their Niagara Falls base for closure, disregarding military value rankings that showed Niagara outperforming several other bases slated to remain open. Air Force Spokesman Douglas Karas said the Air Force's "mission compatibility index" was just one of the factors considered in the base-closure decisions. Asked why at least nine bases with airlift missions were slated to stay open when they had lower "MCI" scores than Niagara, Karas said the Base Closure Executive Group sometimes deviated from its own rating system. "There were cases in the analysis process where lower ranked bases were retained," Karas said. "In those cases, the Base Closure Executive Group used their collective judgment, that, when combined with the MCI scores, resulted in the retention of lower-ranked installations. This was true in Niagara's case."

A lobbyist for New York State on the issue, John M. Simmons, said the Air Force's response proves that the base-closure recommendations followed "a judgmental, and not an analytical, process." The Pentagon was supposed to judge each base primarily on its military value - yet in this case the Air Force bypassed the tool it created for judging military value. "The Air Force in their response acknowledged that they themselves ignored the results of a key analytical tool...created for the BRAC process," Simmons said. "They simply took the position that their judgment trumped the analysis."

Considering these facts and figures; I am writing to remind you, our elected representative, of your obligation to use all means necessary in order to persuade the BRAC to reconsider the recommendation to close the station. The fine men and women of the 914th Airlift Wing and the 107th Air Refueling Wing have been instrumental in securing the home front and fighting the war on terror overseas and these highly-decorated units have served their country and represented our State and local communities well.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this most important matter.

Sincerely,

ELLCOTT DEVELOPMENT COMPANY



CARL P. PALADINO
Chief Executive Officer