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JUN 27 2005

BRAC Commission

JUL 29 2005

Received

June 13, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman, Base Realignment and Closure Commission  
Polk Building, Suite 600 & 625  
2521 South Clark Street  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi,

Subject: Support For Maintaining The 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing in Portland, Oregon

The recent Department of Defense recommendation to the BRAC Commission for moving the 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing's F-15 aircraft from Portland, Oregon to New Orleans and Atlantic City is a mistake. This decision poses potential risks to lives and commercial installations in the Pacific Northwest, and neglects the mission of homeland defense. Even a cursory review of the facts clearly demonstrates why this decision places the Pacific Northwest and Western Region of the United States at unnecessary risk.

First, the 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing in Portland, Oregon, protects our homeland with the F-15 Eagle jet fighter. Their present location is geographically strategic, providing both continuous air defense and air superiority capabilities from northern California well into Canada, as part of the 24-hour continuous alert North American Air Defense (NORAD) system. No other base in the Pacific Northwest covers this range, and without it, 11 million people and crucial economic centers will be placed at risk. The Northwest is home to vital port facilities, hydroelectric dams and transmission grids, nuclear power plants and storage depots, transportation networks, commercial and manufacturing centers that would be vulnerable if the Portland base is closed.

Secondly, the tragic events of September 11 exposed the devastating effect terrorists can achieve by using large aircraft as effective weapons. Most of the major routes for commercial airlines operating between Asia and North America traverse the West Coast airspace, with many taking off at West Coast international airports heavily "fuel loaded" for their long flights. Dept. of Defense would be neglecting public safety in this region if it ignores the lessons of 9/11 and the warnings of current-day intelligence information, in its recommendation to close the only dedicated front line fighter wing capable of providing logistical and operational support to protect the western United States.

Finally, the citizens of the Pacific Northwest and Northern California deserve the same protection afforded the gulf coast and eastern seaboard. This proposed decrease in Air Defense capability, combined with known current threats and the likelihood of multiple targets that are widely dispersed, provide many plausible scenarios and potentially devastating opportunities for foreign or domestic terrorists.

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Realistically, the 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing's homeland defense mission is more critical now than ever before.

The Department of Defense recommendations jeopardize the security of the Northwest and the entire nation. This proposal cannot and should not be ignored. We support our Congressional delegates and state leadership in their efforts to change the Department's recommendation that transfers dedicated air defense capabilities away from the Pacific Northwest. We urgently request your support and leadership to help reverse this ill-advised recommendation.

Thank you for your dedicated service, and careful consideration of the resources that are needed to keep the Pacific Northwest and the United States safe.

Respectfully yours,

Jonathan Schlueter  
Executive Director

cc: U.S. Senator Ron Wyden  
U.S. Senator Gordon Smith  
Congressman Earl Blumenauer  
Congresswoman Darlene Hooley  
Congressman David Wu  
Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski