

JUL 13 2005

Received

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July 9, 2005

Mr. Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld: RE: BRAC COMMISSION
ON MILITARY CLOSINGS

They say, "Timing is everything" and this is certainly no time to close vital military facilities, one being Otis ANG Base here on Cape Cod.

After the horrific bombings in London it makes it even more critical to the defense of our country to keep the 102nd Fighter Wing at Otis Air Base intact. The jets from this base were the first to arrive at the World Trade Center in New York on September 11th. These very experienced pilots cover the coast from Maine to the Carolinas and their base is in a prime central local close to the Atlantic Ocean to carry out expeditiously their duties patrolling this section of the East Coast.

The suggestion to move operations of this Wing inland where air traffic is often heaviest or further away from this area is to subject the large cities of Boston, MA., Providence, RI., Bridgeport and New Haven, CT., Portland, ME., New York City, etc. to no air patrol coverage in the case of an impending attack and leaves the citizens living near these cities very vulnerable and "out in left field," so to speak.

In addition, adjacent to the Otis Air Base is the Cape Cod Canal. It is vital that oceangoing traffic not be disrupted by a terrorist attack. The canal and its shoreline must be protected and the 102nd Fighter Wing is the 1st line of defense along with the Coast Guard in that area.

Currently, the Coast Guard based at Otis Air Base is in no position to maintain the airstrips which would deteriorate without the repairs and supervision due in its operations. The responsibility to keep these airstrips operational lie with the Otis ANG.

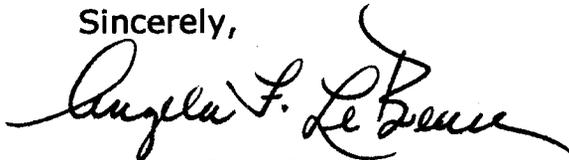
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Also, the Coast Guard is long overdue in receiving new patrol boats, ^{Received}copters and equipment given their extra duties post 9/11. Why would the Department of Defense leave the Coast Guard stranded by a decision to close Otis Air Base? They do an outstanding job and deserve more.

We are living in very uncertain times but one thing is certain....the utmost responsibility of the Defense Department in the minds of my fellow Cape Codders, many of whom are military retirees, is protection from dangerous attacks and closing Otis ANG would be a vast mistake and miscalculation.

Thank you for reading my letter,

Sincerely,



Angela F. LeBeau

cc: President George W. Bush
Mr. Anthony Principi, BRAC Commissioner ✓