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HFF-DCRep. Thomas_M._Reynolds

NO. 0261 P. 18

THOMAS M. REYNOLDS
26TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

COMMITTEE ON
HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
332 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6265

DISTRICT OFFICES:
500 EBSJAY, SUITE 260
WILLIAMSVILLE, NY 14221
(716) 634-2324

1577 WEST RIDGE ROAD
ROCHESTER, NY 14615
(585) 853-5570

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

August 10, 2005

The Honorable Philip Coyle, Commissioner
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioner Coyle,

I am writing to you regarding the upcoming hearing dealing with the environmental stewardship of installations recommended for closure or realignment.

In the recent General Accountability Office (GAO) report, and the GAO testimony given before the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, officials testified that the Pentagon failed to include required environmental costs associated with base closing recommendations, which adds to the federal government's cost of closing the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

In light of this, I have enclosed some additional information for your review, detailing the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station's estimated environmental cost that the Air Force failed to provide as a potential closure costs for this installation.

The Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station stores more fuel on site than the entire tanker task force off-loaded in an entire month during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Niagara can store 865,000 gallons of fuel.

As you know, the Pentagon is required to completely restore any base they close for future use. Given that fact, the question remains how restoration of the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station is possible when no environmental clean-up has been factored into Air Force cost estimates.

Further, the clean-up costs provide further evidence that closing the Niagara Falls Air Reserve station will not provide savings to the Department of Defense.

As I testified before the BRAC Commission on 27 June 2005, "either through willful intent, or a simple miscalculation, the Air Force could only find 'savings' by contravening the GAO's guidelines on how to calculate personnel savings.

They also failed to include the cost of "enclaving" the tenants who remain if the base closes, like the Army MEPS, and the North East Air Defense system, for example.

"Finally, they used outdated data when calculating the cost of operating the base. In fact, when the corrected COBRA data was briefed to your staff last week, it showed that costs actually EXCEEDED savings."