

FAX COVER SHEET

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Date: Aug 23, 2005

This sheet is page 1 of 3 pages to be faxed.

To: Honorable Skinner
Att. Kristen Baxter - Thank you!
Name: _____

Company: BRAC

Phone Number: _____

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From:

Name: Joann Payne

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August 23, 2005

The Honorable Sam Skinner
BRAC
2521 Smith Clark Road
Arlington, VA

Dear Secretary Skinner,

I want to thank you and your staff, especially Kristen, for being so kind to me. I still represent women who are certified in the DBE Program. The numbers of women now participating in the program has grown to over 10,000— I'm so proud! I also represent the Federation of Women Contractors located in Chicago and a majority of members of Women Construction Associations in Illinois.

I also represent the City of Chesapeake, Virginia so I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to discuss the proposed Oceana base closing. Chesapeake, admittedly, is a small part of the picture but most of Fentress is located there and the city houses the aircraft carrier night flights.

The City Council and Council member Debbie Ritter, chair of the Land Use Study, would like for you to visit Chesapeake to see firsthand that the city does not have any encroachment issues. Chesapeake has a great relationship with the US Navy and the city has never instituted a request for a flight pattern change for Fentress.

I am not going to profess to be an expert on the issues already presented to the Commission. You have heard testimony on key points – the positives and the negatives – of both Oceana and Cecil Field. What I want to convey to you today is what I do know. In talking with Navy families, who have served at both Oceana and Cecil but did not train at either one, I was struck by the fact that missing from the discussion was the quality of life issue and the misinformation about flight training at Oceana. I believe these are two important issues for the Commission to consider.

Quality of Life

- Per the Navy families I spoke with, they feel that the quality of life in the Virginia Beach area is far superior to Jacksonville – education, housing, infrastructure, etc.
- There are not many job opportunities in Jacksonville, especially for college educated spouses or incentives to start your own business.
- If Oceana is relocated to Cecil, families, especially with school starting, will be have their lives completely disrupted.
- A move to Jacksonville, FL. will not be desirable or affordable to young sailors and their families.

- A great amount of additional funds will be needed to restore the military hospital, facilities, commissaries, and other military base life needs at Cecil.

Flight Training

- Per the pilots I spoke with, who have been assigned at both Oceana and Cecil, said that both had adjusted flight patterns with the most drastic being at Cecil. For night flying onto Whitehouse field, for example, they had to fly a right-hand pattern all the time because of the population problem and encroachment problems with a left-hand pattern.
- Oceana's Fentress only required a right-hand flight pattern in inclement weather.
- The 200 feet difference at Fentress was "no big deal" to the pilots and they felt that flight patterns are different at all base training fields. These pilots were quite upset for it be suggested that pilots at Oceana received inferior training and believe that the Navy had documentation to the contrary.

Furthermore, my cousin heads an Air Traffic Control Facility in the Northeast. I discussed with her the memorandum presented by the Florida delegation this past Saturday. She was emphatic when she said "that it was an 'internal memo' and the FAA never responds to an elected official in this manner." I would suggest to you that the Commission should request an official position from the FAA because I believe the memo is misleading.

My cousin also informed me that since there have not been military jets at Cecil since 1998, several new procedures will have to be followed before flights can commence. These procedures include an Environmental Impact Study, which will take at least 2 to 3 years, and she believes that there will likely be limitations and/or restrictions proposed within one year because of the 30 miles the jets will have to fly over buildings and large populated areas to get to the ocean to start their training.

She also believes that the proposed move to Cecil from Oceana will have a considerably negative impact on commercial aviation because the Jacksonville Traffic Control will need more staff and equipment because they will now have to have contact with the military pilots and design a new support system which will include the military jets in addition to the commercial ones. Additionally, my cousin stated that in inclement weather, especially in thunderstorms, the jets at Cecil Field will "eat up" the escape routes used today by commercial aircraft and the delays will be so extreme that air traffic up and down the East Coast will be greatly affected and will hurt the airline industry.

Lastly, to end the problem of encroachment perhaps the Commission could suggest a Special Fund be created that would assist state and local governments in purchasing Development Rights to protect the encroachment problems and the rights of the land owner.

Thank you so for your time consideration and I look forward to seeing you again.

