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STATE HOUSE
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204-2797

REBECCA S. SKILLMAN
LT. GOVERNOR

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May 11, 2005

The Honorable Philip Coyle
BRAC Commissioner
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioner Coyle:

As Lt. Governor, I chair Indiana's Military Base Planning Council which was formed to insure that that the Naval Support Activity at Crane is fully supported by the State's infrastructure, is protected from any encroachment, and is well integrated into its surrounding community. As the leader of the State's oversight of Crane, I am fully aware of its military value and, also, of its strong attributes that should reflect into the "other considerations" of the BRAC criteria. I would like to share those attributes with you.

I believe it would be very difficult to obtain any significant cost savings by realigning functions from Crane to other installations. Due to the extensive stores of munitions at Crane, it would be very difficult to actually close the base. Therefore, the costs of security and maintenance will continue. Coupled with the fact that Crane's labor rates are among the DOD's lowest, makes realignment savings extremely unlikely.

Crane is the second largest employer in southern Indiana where the unemployment rate is quite high. Therefore, its economic impact on the surrounding communities is extreme. For example, in the three counties that Crane is located in; Martin, Greene and Lawrence, its contributed share of total wages is 37%, 26% and 12% respectively. In the towns of Loogootee, Bloomfield and Bedford, in those same counties, the contribution is 67%, 46% and 18% respectively.

While Crane is located in a relatively under-populated area of the State, it benefits from robust infrastructure including: proximity to North-South and East-West Intestates (I-65, I-70, I-64), including planned I-69 which will be adjacent to Crane; being within two hours of international airports in Indianapolis and Louisville with their major Federal Express and United Parcel operations; redundant natural gas pipelines and wholesalers; redundant electric suppliers; redundant telephone and high speed data suppliers; and, unlimited water supply with an on-base

lake. Crane is located in the middle of many small communities with excellent schools and low cost of living. It is also close to Bloomington, a major shopping and entertainment center. Finally, Crane is able to recruit an almost limitless technical workforce from Indiana University, Purdue University, Notre Dame and Rose-Hulman.

While Crane has very well maintained facilities, it does have many environmental issues that would be costly to restore. These include: Hundreds of buildings with extensive asbestos use; hundreds of semi-buried magazines which may have explosive or chemical contamination; many explosive, ordnance and weapons ranges which have explosive, chemical and lead contamination. In addition, the majority of the operational buildings do not meet current OSHA standards.

As you can see, Crane does score high in the "other considerations" of: Small or no return on investment; large economic impact on surrounding communities; robust infrastructure support; and high environmental impact or restoration cost.

Crane would seem to be an ideal technical installation for the recruitment and retention of technical talent for the DOD. Due to the high availability from Indiana schools of scientists and engineers, coupled with the low cost of living and lack of competition for technical personnel in the Crane area, the employee turnover rate is nil. Crane's location is also one of the reasons that its labor rates are among the lowest for DOD technical centers.

While we certainly believe Crane's diverse technical and industrial expertise, excellent facilities, size and no encroachment should give it a very high military value; its "other considerations" should combine with that military value to make it an ideal installation for the DOD in the 21st Century.

Sincerely,

Rebecca S. Skillman
Lieutenant Governor