BRAC Commission

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Received

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 3, 2005

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

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Airborne Laser program (ABL) will include eight B747 aircraft and a chemical plant that must be located far from population centers for safety reasons. Despite being placed on the BRAC list this year, Cannon AFB has a huge ramp, modern facilities, and is a short-distance to the Air Force scientific community and ABL program management office at nearby Kirtland AFB. Importantly, Cannon AFB suffers from no encroachment and is in a secluded area of farmland in eastern New Mexico, far from major population centers.

As we stated to the BRAC Commission in June, Cannon AFB is a wonderful base in a poor community. The citizens of Clovis, NM are hard-working people who have supported the Air Force for five decades. The base should not be closed. It seems to us that if the ABL program needs a base, Cannon AFB should be considered.

We respectfully request the status of the Department of Defense's planning for the basing of these aircraft and chemical plant, and the reasons why Cannon AFB was overlooked for this future total force mission during your BRAC analysis.

Sincerely,

Pete V. Domenici
U.S. Senator

Jeff Bingaman
U.S. Senator

Cc: Mr. Tony Principi, Chairman, Base Closure and Realignment Commission
General Lloyd Newton, Commissioner, Base Closure and Realignment Commission