

September 1, 2005

SEP 09 2005

Received

Brac Commission
2521 South Clark Street
Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Re: Oceana Naval Air Station
Virginia Beach, VA

Gentlemen:

I am truly surprised and very angry at your decision to close Oceana Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach. There are a few points that I think you need to take a look at and rethink your decision.

Get your pencil out and I want you to do the math, just because some person comes up with a cost of 1.6 billion or so to move Oceana, is this accurate or even reasonable? I think not, however the public may never know the figures, because politics will keep that hidden. I want you to stop and do your own math. How much does it cost to move 1 household of people from Virginia Beach to Florida and we are talking thousands of households. The radar equipment which is vital to these pilots and contained in what we term as our golf ball cannot, I am sure be picked up and moved to Cecil Field, rather that will all have to be rebuilt there, at what cost will this alone be. Then there is the hush house where they work on aircraft that cost millions and will have to be rebuilt. It will be a necessity with the high noise jets even out in the woods, because people who work on the base will not be able to stand the noise and besides it vibrates buildings all around if the noise is not contained. We are also talking hangers, offices, shops, commissary, along with Navy Exchange. Just the guard gates which they have just spent a bundle on as well as the fencing which cost the Navy millions. At this time Congress is trying to find money to continue to support our troops, pay for robots and equipment that has to go to our troops in harms way. Now you are saying that we have the money to just up and spend billions and billions, and make no mistake it will take them to move a base that even the Navy has said needs to remain where it is.

Is it more prudent to have a base some 95 miles inland from the ocean and aircraft carriers rather than 5 or 6 miles? We are in a fuel crunch here and using more than is being produced practically and you want to add billions of gallons of fuel over the long haul to operate these jets. How much will this cost the taxpayer?

The density of population around the base I agree must stop and it does need to be contained and should have been some years ago. However for the immediate future the City of Virginia Beach and the state of Virginia have to buy up the property closest to the

air station. Let me point out that the homes in Oceana Gardens have been there since the 1950's so this is not new development. Cardinal Estates has been there since the 1960's. I agree there are other sections that have been developed against the Navy's wishes and pointing the finger at anyone at this point is futile, however finding a solution is vital at this time.

The Navy Seals, our elite team and a vital part of our defense have stated that the operations they are engaged in are necessary and crucial to their training and cannot be accomplished without Oceana being where it is. Are we going to have to spend billions to figure out how we will move these operations to Florida also. I believe that it is vital they be on the coast and where will their air power be but 95 miles inland. Besides the coast of Florida is more populated than Virginia and I truly cannot imagine buying enough land on the oceanfront to move our Seals. This whole concept is not workable at all. So are our Seals left hanging out to dry or what?

There is also a problem as I see it putting not only our base in hurricane alley, but our men and women who are in the Navy and their families. I think that Mississippi and Louisiana give us good examples of what can happen there. When our men and women are in combat they surely do not need to have to worry about their families in the path of destruction. Virginia has been very fortunate and I am truly thankful for that, but history tells us we are less vulnerable than Florida.

There is also the question of carriers for these training flights. Norfolk is the home of most of the fleet of aircraft carriers. Are these ships to steam down the coast to Florida for practice. The crew will be on board for days and away from their families longer. Also what about the distance and the slow movement of such a huge ship? What happens if there comes a crisis that the planes have to be on carriers and gone in a hurry, the 95 miles of flight to sea plus to the carrier can make the difference of life and death for our nation. Should the ships be moved where would they go in Florida and as it stands now communication is all local among the bases and if necessary classified information can be hand carried from one base to another in a matter of minutes not hours.

What about Cecil Field being partially developed into business's as Florida's Governor is so proud of. Will these business's coexist with the base or are they going to have to move. Well here we go again with the domino affect, who is going to pay to have all this moved and cleared and who will pay for this relocation cost?

Lets talk about air space restrictions, this is one of the primary reasons that Oceana is so vital, because they have unrestricted air space here. Please take a look at an overlay of the air space in Florida between Cecil and the coast. There is no such thing as unrestricted air space in Florida. The commercial traffic is going to get worse, not better in the future, then where will the Navy be? I suppose in a national emergency the Navy will have to file flight plans and have them cleared for flight. You have to be kidding, what a mess that would be and the time involved could just cost this nation its freedom as well as huge loss of civilian life.

Now, let me ask you if you have ever flown into any major city in the United States? If you have then what did you come in over to land? I believe there are homes, business, etc. If a Navy pilot gets into trouble he will head to sea and since it is so close history tells us as a rule they make it. For 43 years I have lived at the foot of the major runway and get fly overs all the time, so I think odds are scarce there will be any more accidents than there are commercially. From your report it was as if thousands are in immediate peril and I sure don't see it that way. Fly into Los Angeles and watch the buildings practically sway on the way in.

Finally if the government has all these loose dollars floating around to make this move and since the Feds are just as responsible as Virginia or Virginia Beach as to encroachment , why can't it be spent in conjunction with the state and city's funds to make this whole think workable. When air easements were taken in the 1970's the Navy asked for more money to buy land and take easements, but they were denied. So whose fault is it, I think all three and it is time to stop pointing fingers and get down to work and stop fighting the people in the Navy who know what they need.

I think moving Oceana to Cecil Field in Florida is just politics as usual and let me tell you I think that the people of the United States should get up in arms and refuse to pay any more taxes until our dollars are used wisely. I am tired of footing the bill for politics as usual and that is just what this is. There is not one grain of common sense to any of it. If you think my figures are off then I suggest you go with what you think and let the government and tax payers pick up that amount and you members of the BRAC Commission be responsible for the entire rest of the bill.

I sure hope you will read this letter and not file it in thirteen because I feel the people need to be heard and heard loud and clear for once.

Sincerely,



Ruby T. Harris
1477 London Bridge Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23453

cc: Senator John Warner
cc: Governor Mark Warner
cc: Ray Firenze
cc: Virginia Beach City Council