

Steve Deleon
522 N. Main St.
Clovis, NM 88101



Dear BRAC Commission,

20 May 2005

My name is Steve Deleon and I live in Clovis NM. I served in the Air Force for 20 years and honorably retired here in 1998. I decided to stay here because of the great surrounding community. When I was stationed here in 1993 I thought Cannon would just be another assignment, but I was very wrong. One of the things that impressed me is the close ties that the community has with the base. Every year, we as a community (including me now as being retired) hold's numerous events to honor our military that we love, need and interact with every day. Just to name a few, we hold annual picnics, parades and awards ceremonies all paid for by the community to show our appreciation. I, along with hundreds of other retirees have many active duty friends. Many retirees come from 100's of miles around to utilize base facilities i.e. the hospital, commissary and Base Exchange. I know most of this has nothing to do with decisions on a bases value, but I wanted to touch on that.

I have looked at the criteria involved in making a decision to keep or close a base and I truly believe we have many more positives that were overlooked to put Cannon on the closure list. I'm sure a lot of the things I'm saying here in this letter you will be hearing about many times, but I'm personally writing you to express my support. I have been to many bases over my active duty days as well as my Father's assignments, also serving 20 years. This area has, so much more to offer than you see on the surface or while crunching the numbers. The weather here is absolutely perfect for year round flying. The lack of encroachment issues should be a major consideration. I was stationed at Macdill when BRAC was looking at bases a few years ago. Aircraft were taking off (and flying) over heavily populated areas, so I wasn't surprised they changed the mission there. We have mostly farm land around Cannon. We have no major airports to interfere with missions. We have a great bombing range within minutes for training (saving fuel and money). Cannon aircraft can fly supersonic and we're within months of having that expanded (even larger airspace with lower altitude flights). The cost of living in this area is very favorable compared to other bases. It's my understanding there are other communities that are more in favor of removing a base from their area, because of the occupied land value.

Please look at our community as a whole. We are a small community with a hometown aura. Clovis is a great place for military members (while stationed here) to raise their children. Good environment for some of the younger military officer and enlisted to help keep them out of trouble. There are numerous churches and the schools are top of the line.

I understand we only have the F-16 missions here right now, but that can be changed if need be. Cannon can support any aircraft or mission you may want to change. The runway and control tower has recently been upgraded. The area has plenty of room to support base growth and further missions, as well as land for housing when needed. Clovis has always been more than willing to work with base officials to see that their needs are met. Bottom line is Clovis and the surrounding area wants and loves our airbase here. As our Mayor David Lansford said "It is our identity".

I understand that it will cost a lot of money to make the changes to keep Cannon, but you have to look well into the future. Years from now other installations will outgrow themselves and you will have to make changes again. We are ready now, to except a bigger base and have the means to support and grow with it for many, many years to come. Again, there are a lot of other positives that you will hear about from others. I apologize for this being so long, as you are very busy. I just wanted to be heard.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the BRAC commission, I implore you to seriously take all this in consideration as well as more information you will get about Clovis and Cannon in the coming weeks. I look forward to seeing some of you when you visit our area. This letter comes from the heart and I would have written it in my own hand, but my handwriting isn't quite the best. I appreciate your time and consideration in this matter and know you will make the right decision.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve R. DeLeon".

Sincerely, Steve R. DeLeon