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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3303

August 10, 2005

BRAC Commission

AUG 11 2005

Received

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I am grateful for the Commission's service to the nation during the 2005 BRAC process. You have taken on many complex issues, but one of the most important is your review of Naval Air Station Oceana for closure or realignment. I am writing to urge you to maximize this opportunity by realigning NAS Oceana's jets to Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort and Beaufort's Marine Corps F18 jets to Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point.

Your analysis of the problems at NAS Oceana has generated a wide range of alternatives. Most of the proposals, such as moving NAS Oceana jets to Georgia or Texas, are impractical and wasteful of our tax dollars. Fortunately, there is one solution that is practical and efficient: move the NAS Oceana F18s to Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort and Beaufort's Marine F18s to MCAS Cherry Point. This would allow the Navy and the Marine Corps to benefit from the capabilities and excellence already found at MCAS Beaufort and MCAS Cherry Point. Such a move allows the Navy to resolve the noise and accident potential problems at Oceana, takes advantage of Beaufort's proximity to the fleet and ensures that the Marine Corps fully utilizes MCAS Cherry Point as its master jet base.

In stark contrast to Virginia Beach's priorities, the region around MCAS Cherry Point has been a leader in compatible land use initiatives and infrastructure investment to keep the air station viable for the long term. In addition, as a result of the 1993 BRAC process, MCAS Cherry Point began preparations to accept 12 squadrons of F18s from Cecil Field. Millions of dollars were spent on preparation for those aircraft. However, the 1995 BRAC redirected the jets to Oceana—for reasons unrelated to Cherry Point's capabilities. That should be factored into any consideration of realigning Oceana jets.

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We are ready, willing and able to accept the jets from MCAS Beaufort to further the Marine Corps' strategic plans. This is a win-win solution for the military and our civilian communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Walter B. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress