



TREASURY DEPARTMENT  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG, PA 17120

BRAC Commission

AUG 15 2005

Received

THE STATE TREASURER

August 11, 2005

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

Dear Chairman Principi:

I respectfully urge you and the other members of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission to reverse the Defense Department's recommendation to close the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NASJRB) Willow Grove and the 911<sup>th</sup> United States Air Force Reserve Airlift Wing located at the Pittsburgh International Airport. The importance of these two bases to our homeland security, our nation's military readiness, and our state's economy cannot be overstated.

As you have noted, NASJRB Willow Grove is one of only three joint bases in the United States. This model facility supports not only the 913<sup>th</sup> United States Air Force Reserve Airlift Wing and the 111<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard – whose members have been forward deployed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait since September 11, 2001 – but also personnel from the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. I am concerned that it does not appear as if the Department of Defense evaluated Willow Grove as a joint facility, choosing instead to take a more narrow approach by asking the Air Force and Navy to conduct separate evaluations. When the entire base is considered, it is clear that Willow Grove supports the Pentagon's goal of jointness in training and operations.

The 911<sup>th</sup> United States Air Force Reserve Airlift Wing stationed at the Pittsburgh International Airport participates in joint service training and supports active duty and reserve forces from Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and beyond. The C-130 aircraft assigned to this base are used to transport combat forces, equipment, and supplies. As you are aware, this base has the capacity to double in size and to take advantage of the four runways at Pittsburgh International Airport – the only airport in the Northeast that never closes. For over ten years, the airport authority has offered the Air Force additional land to expand its operation. I encourage you and members of the Commission to increase the size of this base, not reduce it.

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Chairman  
Page Two  
August 11, 2005

In addition to sparing these two bases, I would also strongly urge you to maintain the gains for the Letterkenny and Tobyhanna Army Depots. The Secretary of Defense's recommendations to expand operations at both of these installations is the right decision. Both have continually demonstrated an ability to rank number one in military value in many important maintenance categories.

Pennsylvania has already lost over 16,000 military jobs in previous Base Realignment and Closing rounds. Estimates are that we will lose at least another 1,800 full-time jobs and possibly over 8,500 part-time reserve and National Guard positions if the Pentagon's recommendations are accepted by the Commission. The total direct economic impact to the economy of the Commonwealth will exceed \$500 million.

It is important to understand the special pride that Pennsylvanians take in the service and sacrifice of our service men and women. Pennsylvania has sent more National Guard troops to the war in Iraq than any other state. Only two states have lost more lives, and as of this week, nearly 100 young men and women from small towns and big cities across Pennsylvania have made the ultimate sacrifice.

I assure you that the Commonwealth will continue to be an excellent host to the dedicated military and civilian personnel and their families who serve here, and I am confident that you will determine it is prudent to retain both the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Willow Grove and 911<sup>th</sup> United States Air Force Reserve Airlift Wing, and to expand new defense-related organizations and missions in Pennsylvania.

I appreciate your serious consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
State Treasurer