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Cottage Grove



June 15, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman, Base Realignment and Closure Commission
Polk Building, Suite 600 & 625
2521 South Clark Street
Arlington, Virginia 22202



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Dear Chairman Principi:

On behalf of the City of Cottage Grove I am writing to voice our opposition to the recommendation to move F-15 aircraft of the 142nd Fighter Wing of the Oregon Air National Guard from Portland, Oregon. The Cottage Grove City Council unanimously supports maintaining the F-15 presence with the 142nd.

The aircraft assigned to the 142nd play an essential role in the Homeland security of the Pacific Northwest. They are located in a prime location near vital maritime and air transportation and can provide quick and efficient response in critical situations. Removal of the F-15s from the 142nd will mean unnecessary delays on responses and jeopardize the safety of all citizens in the Pacific Northwest.

As citizens of the Pacific Northwest we deserve the same protection afforded the Eastern United States. This decrease in Air Defense capability, coupled with known current threats and the likelihood of multiple targets that are widely dispersed in our region becomes a scenario that is more appealing and potentially a very successful opportunity for terrorists. Realistically, the 142nd Fighter Wing's homeland defense mission is more critical now than previously perceived.

The homeland defense mission of the 142nd Fighter Wing can only be successfully carried out by maintaining continuous air superiority. The 142nd Fighter Wing stands on 24-hour alert patrolling the airspace north to the Canadian border and south to the California border - no other base in the Pacific Northwest can cover this range. The F-15 provides the equipment to meet the needs of the protection of the Pacific Northwest.

The men and women of the Oregon Army and Air National Guard have a distinguished history and deserve recognition for their courage, abilities and expertise. However, they do not only deserve recognition, but also they deserve to have the proper tools to complete their assigned mission.

Recently, the Cottage Grove Community hosted an Armed Forces Day celebration that honored our own 2nd Battalion of the 162nd Infantry for their service in Iraq and in the community as well as all veterans and current military personnel. When the two F-15s flew-over the ceremonies it gave the entire community not only a sense of pride but a feeling of safety. Please do not take that safety for our citizens away.

On behalf of our citizens, the Cottage Grove City Council respectfully requests that the recommendation from the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to transfer aircraft from the 142nd Fighter Wing be reversed and that the 142nd continue to be provided with the air defense capabilities to accomplish their mission of homeland defense for the Pacific Northwest.

Sincerely,



Gary Williams
Mayor

cc: Senator Gordon Smith
Senator Ron Wyden
Congressman Peter DeFazio
Congresswoman Darlene Hooley