

DCN:

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20510

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May 20, 2005

The Honorable Donald Rumsfeld  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We wanted to take this opportunity to address your testimony from the May 16<sup>th</sup> hearing of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission. During the hearing, you made comments regarding the success of redevelopment at facilities that have been closed during previous BRAC rounds.

The DoD's recommendation to close the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) processing center in Limestone, Maine, is particularly troubling in light of your comments. This facility, which employs more than 360 people in our home state, was established shortly after the 1991 BRAC Commission's misguided closure of Loring Air Force Base. In working to promote redevelopment at Loring AFB, the Defense Department made a commitment to the facility and community by opening a DFAS processing center.

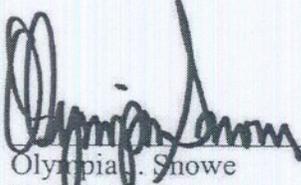
Since coming online in 1995, DFAS Limestone has been an exemplary model of efficiency. When the former Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller, Dov Zakheim, toured the Limestone facility in June 2003, he correctly noted that, "They [DFAS Loring] have a reputation in DFAS, a good one. We are looking to bring people back from [DFAS centers] in Europe, and I see a good quality of work here. We think we can be more efficient doing the work here."

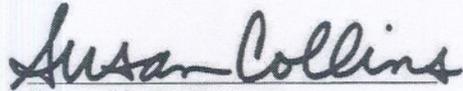
Given the value of this facility, both to DoD and to the efforts to redevelop Loring AFB, we are troubled and concerned about your comments during the hearing when you stated, "Many local economies that were impacted by previous BRAC decisions did successfully find ways to get positive results out of a situation that at first must have seemed dire, which is a tribute, of course, to the ingenuity of those folks." The closure of Loring was a dire situation for the citizens of Aroostook County, Maine. Loring AFB's champions, however, demonstrated their own ingenuity in attracting a DFAS processing center to the facility. Unfortunately, despite your own personal comments lauding those who have recovered from previous base closure rounds, DoD has recommended once again to withdraw from Limestone, Maine. The proposal to close DFAS Limestone would be a second devastating blow from DoD to an area that has long been a faithful servant of our nation's military.

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It is our hope that you recognize that your comments before the Commission do not match DoD's actions in formulating the BRAC 2005 proposal.

Sincerely,

  
Olympia J. Snowe  
United States Senator

  
Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator