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STATE OF NEW YORK

May 16, 2005

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GEORGE E. PATAKI
GOVERNOR

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you know, the citizens of the State of New York take tremendous pride in the contributions they are making to the nation's defense and particularly to the ongoing operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Given the significant contributions of one base in particular, the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, I was extremely disappointed to learn it was singled out for closure by the Department of Defense.

I appreciate the commitment you made to me on April 21, 2005 that BRAC Commissioners would personally visit any major base targeted for closure. Because of the great importance of this base, I would encourage you to personally visit the Niagara facility to see first-hand its tremendous value.

In addition, I would also request that the BRAC Commission schedule a Regional Hearing in the Buffalo / Niagara region to ensure that the citizens of Niagara County and Western New York can participate in the BRAC hearing and have every opportunity to voice their support for the Niagara Air Reserve Station.

As I discussed with you in April, the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station has played a vital role when it comes to the nation's defense and to strengthening our homeland security strategy. The brave airmen and women from the 914th and 107th Airlift Wings have and continue to make extraordinary contributions to our State and nation in War on Terror.

Its aircraft have been deployed to the very front lines in Iraq, its recruitment remains high, the facility has no encroachment, it is a Total Force joint facility, it is strategically located among 5 major population centers in the Northeast United States and Canada, and its impact on the community is profound.

Given these attributes, your participation during the base visit process and the selection of a Regional Hearing in the Buffalo / Niagara region will be essential. It's important to provide a direct opportunity for those most impacted by this recommendation to communicate their views on the importance of keeping the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station open.

Very truly yours,

Chairman Anthony J. Principi
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
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