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June 8, 2005

Chairman Anthony J. Principi
Base Realignment & Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Subject: Possible Closure of the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Base

Dear Chairman Principi and BRAC Commissioners:

The possibility of closing the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Base as recommended by Pentagon officials, causes me great consternation for the safety of the citizens of the Western New York Region and our Country's combat readiness. This is a big mistake.

I find it appalling that the active duty forces have seen fit to take planes, missions and jobs away from so many dedicated and militarily proficient members of both the Air Force Reserve and the New York Air National Guard based at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Base. Their unit histories are replete with successes in meeting and exceeding the Active Duty Force's expectations, particularly when called upon to perform in combat theatre of operations. Most reasonable and informed citizens interpret the Pentagon's actions as declaring "war" on the reserve forces. Don't let this happen. Their future is in your hands.

I also find in appalling to accept a reduction in the combat ready reserve forces and resources at a time when our Country is militarily over extended with world challenges and commitments ranging from Afghanistan to Iraq, along with numerous other countries.

I join with fellow Western New Yorkers in voicing in the strongest terms possible to remove the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Base from the Pentagon's recommended list of Base closures. I am sure you realize the 914th Airlift Wing is the last Air Force Reserve-flying unit in New York State. Unfortunately, our State has experienced a constant history of cut backs in Air Force activity. The history of the 107th Air Refueling Wing, New York Air National Guard is as impressive as any active duty organization, operating at a fraction of the cost of an active unit.

Thank you for your attention.

Regards,

Patrick J. Shannon