



June 16, 2005

Anthony Principi
Chairman, The BRAC Commission
The Polk Building, Suite 600 & 625
2521 South Clark Street
Arlington, VA 22202



06202005

Dear Chairman Principi:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Commissioners and staff of the Port of Vancouver USA. The Port of Vancouver USA is located on the Columbia River just across from Terminal 6 of the Port of Portland. I am Executive Director of the Port, the Chair-Elect of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) and the Chair of the Cooperative Development Committee of the Washington Public Ports Association (WPPA). I am also a retired Brigadier General having served over 31 years in the Oregon Air National Guard in almost every unit in the Oregon Air National Guard including, but mostly, the 142nd Fighter Wing located at the Portland Air National Guard Base. As such, on a personal and professional basis, I am writing in support of Oregon's military installations at the Portland Air National Guard Base. Specifically, we are requesting that the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) reconsider its recommendation to reassign Units currently located at this facility to bases outside the state of Oregon.

Let me say first, on a personal level, after serving over 31 years in the Oregon Air National Guard, that the 142nd Fighter Wing, which I am very familiar with, is a superb organization. For years it has been well-run, efficient and effective in providing air defense on a 24-hour alert basis for the Northwest part of the United States. The men and women of this organization, a great many of whom live in Clark County, Washington, are a significant and vital part of our community and provide for the necessary defense we believe essential to this part of the country.

But even more importantly, and on a professional basis, we are greatly concerned about the risk that the removal of the 142nd Fighter Wing poses to the defense of the Northwest sector of the United States. In the spring of 2004, the Washington Public Ports Association published a Marine Cargo Forecast (co-sponsored by the Washington State Department of Transportation) looking

Anthony Principi Letter

June 16, 2005

Page 2

at marine cargo growth over the next 20 years. The WPPA also published a Rail Capacity Study looking at freight and passenger rail issues over the same time frame. These studies indicated that waterborne cargo will grow by at least two-thirds in the next 20 years, with the likelihood of container traffic tripling. We anticipate that freight borne on the railroad system will double in that timeframe. Many believe waterborne cargo will increase more than projected considering the congestion which has resulted in the diversion of cargo from Southern California to, in particular, the Puget Sound area. Our information indicates that in 2005 marine container cargo in Seattle has increased by 38.7% and marine container cargo in Tacoma has increased by 10.5% through the month of April compared to 2004 figures. Marine cargo at the Port of Vancouver USA has also increased by 19.2% compared to the first four months of 2004. These projections are significantly ahead of the studies completed only last year.

Yet, despite the current importance of the trade corridors and ports in the Pacific Northwest, and the significant anticipated growth, the defense of this important infrastructure is being threatened by removal of effective fighter cover and refueling capability. As I understand it, the proposed closure would result in a significantly disproportionate loss of Air Force fighter aircraft in the Northwest region as compared to the Southwest, Southeast, and Northeast quadrants of the United States. Considering further the vulnerability of the ports, rail systems, and waterways (specific note in the Columbia River should be given to the dams located on the Columbia and Snake Rivers), the removal of effective fighter cover seems to put our region at a disproportionate risk. I am even informed that Central Europe would be better protected by the U.S. Air Force than the Northwest part of the United States if these reductions were put into effect.

September 11, 2001, brought a new sense to the people of this country as to the need for effective fighter aircraft protection. As such, we urge you to reconsider removing the 142nd Fighter Squadron from the Portland Air National Guard Base.

Sincerely,

PORT OF VANCOUVER USA


Lawrence L. Paulson
Executive Director



Anthony Principi Letter
June 16, 2005
Page 3

LLP:br

Cc: Senator Patty Murray
Senator Maria Cantwell
Representative Brian Baird
Major General Raymond F. Rees
Brigadier General Raymond Byrne, Jr.
Brigadier General Fred Rosenbaum (ret)
Commissioner Nancy Baker, Port of Vancouver
Commissioner Arch Miller, Port of Vancouver,
Commissioner Bob Moser, Port of Vancouver
Timothy Farrel, Executive Director, Port of Tacoma
Mic Dinsmore, Executive Director, Port of Seattle
Pat Jones, Executive Director, WPPA