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May 18, 2005

The Honorable Anthony Principi, Chairman
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

The Defense Department's base realignment and closure recommendations will have a significant impact on military installations in Alaska. Of particular concern to me is the recommendation to realign Eielson Air Force Base, but keep the base open in a "warm" status. Eielson's close proximity to vast airspaces and ranges provides an extremely valuable military asset to the Defense Department. Strategically, the location of the installation allows units based there to respond to contingencies in Europe faster than units at bases on the East Coast. The same is true for the Pacific Theater. Eielson units can deploy to Korea more expeditiously than many of the units based in California.

Due to the high military value of Eielson Air Force Base, I respectfully request the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to conduct a hearing in Fairbanks, Alaska as soon as possible to evaluate the proposed recommendation. It is imperative for the commission to demonstrate the recommendation was based on the criteria set out in law and the force structure plan.

I look forward to working with you as you lead the commission through this very difficult process in the coming months. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

With best wishes,

Cordially,



TED STEVENS
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense

PVE