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# Independence Police Department

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June 13, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman, Base Realignment and Closure Commission  
Polk Building, Suite 600 & 625  
2521 South Clark Street  
Arlington, VA 22202



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RE: 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter wing

Dear Chairman Principi,

The recent DOD recommendation to the BRAC Commission suggesting a move of the 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing's F-15 aircraft to New Orleans and Atlantic City does not make good sense. This idea does not fit well with our heightened emphasis on homeland security and it places the Pacific Northwest and Western Region of the United States at risk.

The 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing in Portland, Oregon, protects our homeland with the F-15 fighters. Their present position is geographically strategic providing both continuous air defense and air superiority capabilities from northern California into Canada. No other base in the Pacific Northwest covers this range, and without it we are at risk. Law enforcement personnel and homeland security officials know that the Pacific Northwest has been a hot spot for suspected terrorist activity. The northwest also provides connecting flights to much of the Pacific Rim. These would be large planes, heavily laden with fuel. We need a full spectrum of resources available to address the threats that may arise from this combination of conditions. When a problem is identified time is of the essence, we cannot wait for fighter planes to arrive from distant air bases.

The citizens of the Pacific Northwest deserve protection similar to that afforded the Eastern United States. What is especially good for this country is that our 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter wing can provide that protection less expensively than other resources.

The 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing's homeland defense mission is more critical now than ever and is being provided to us at a bargain price. How can it make sense to relocate this operation? Please support the security of the Northwest and work to reverse the DOD recommendations. I am convinced that once you review the facts you will see the need for the 142<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing to remain in Portland. Thank you for your help on this important issue for the entire Northwest.

Sincerely,

Vernon Wells  
Chief of Police