

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of the Niagara Military Affairs Council (other known as NIMAC). NIMAC was formed in 1996 as a direct result of the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) being considered for closure the prior year by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). The 1995 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission made the decision later that year to remove NFARS from the list of facilities slated for closure. The BRAC Commissions comment at that time was that the NFARS should be updated and improved if it was to survive another BRAC that would come for sure in the future. Much work was done in the ensuing years to accomplish this as NIMAC and our Washington DC consultant worked with our delegation in Washington to see these projects through the Congressional budget process. In total, \$35,000,000 in construction and upgrades to the NFARS were completed from 1996-2005.

Unfortunately, the NFARS found itself on the closure list again in 2005. The 914th AW and the 107th ARW were slated for closure by DOD with the aircraft being assigned to other locations outside of New York State. If the base would have closed, it would have eliminated all support to the Niagara Falls International Airport which depends on the Base for fire, crash and rescue, assistance in snow plowing, grass cutting and maintenance which is shared at this time. The closure of the NFARS would have been a disaster for the future of the airport and Western New York in general as we would have seen the elimination of 3,000 local jobs and the elimination of an annual \$150,000,000 economic impact. Fortunately, again we were able to make the case for Niagara and the BRAC Commission removed the Base from the closure list.

Although NIMAC is a volunteer organization we do have the expense of regular representation in Washington DC. Since 2005 NIMAC has assisted our Washington delegation in an additional \$60,000,000 in existing and future construction at NFARS. We have also continued to work with our delegation concerning new aircraft to be assigned to NFARS and future missions that will enhance and ensure the success of NFARS for the future. This success can only be accomplished by the regular and consistent representation at the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill by NIMAC's Washington consultant.

We know that another BRAC will happen again in the future and NIMAC plans to continue its effort and be ready. The investment in NIMAC's efforts at this time are minor compared to the excessive costs of reuse and redevelopment expenses of closed military installations that unfortunately this State is familiar with at Rome and Plattsburg. We ask that New York State continue to support NIMAC financially in this venture on behalf of the people of Western New York and the men and women of the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

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