

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 12, 2004

The Honorable Gordon England
Secretary of the Navy
Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We understand the necessity for the Department of Defense to use broad selection criteria in evaluating its bases for the Base Realignment and Closure process. Now that these selection criteria have been finalized, the Navy must develop more specific subcriteria to provide specific guidance for the evaluation of the nation's shipyards.

As you develop the subcriteria for Naval shipyards we believe they should address the following considerations:

- Critical Trade Skills. In numerous military construction and maintenance occupations, particularly those tied to naval nuclear propulsion, it can take six to eight years to develop requisite skills and competencies. Today in some of these critical occupations, the workforce is at or below critical mass and must be protected. While temporary assignments away from home are commonplace and an accepted aspect of mission support, permanent relocation efforts have never been successful. Indeed, targeted movement of critical trade skills must be carefully weighed considering that the workforce in these skills is often the most established and therefore the least willing to relocate. Additionally, in past analyses, military value was based on the skill sets available to perform the assigned mission rather than the capabilities these skill sets could perform if the scope of the mission was expanded. We maintain that installations with a workforce of critical trade skills have high military value based on the missions they are capable of supporting beyond those currently assigned or historically performed.

Demonstrated Ability to Transform. Installations with a demonstrated ability to reorient themselves to new missions provide the nation with the greatest military value over time. This ability to adapt and embrace change is a function of the culture of the workforce. Installations with a culture predisposed to change and continually reinventing themselves to provide more effective and efficient operations have high military value.

- Irreplaceable Properties and Facilities. The nation has numerous irreplaceable defense assets. These include installations with piers, drydocks, airspace and ranges that once lost, cannot be recovered without considerable cost and effort. These installations with irreplaceable properties and facilities have high military value.

Strategic Location. The Naval shipyards are geographically situated in four of our Nation's natural deep-water seaports. These locations provide for optimum effectiveness

and strategic purposes and provide the Navy with the greatest options for operational support. Additionally, evaluation of the value of a facility's strategic location must consider homeland security.

Licenses and Permits. Consideration must be given to the difficulty of relocating missions and functions requiring stringent Federal licensing or permitting requirements. Among these are the non-transferable environmental permits and nuclear license held by Naval shipyards. The loss of such permits or licenses translates into the loss of capability and capacity, and may result in a significant vulnerability in national defense.

Previous Capacity Reduction. Previous BRAC rounds have already reduced the number of shipyards by 50 percent. Additionally, according to the Department of Defense, Naval shipyards have reduced their excess capacity 13 percent as compared to 1989, which is the baseline year that the Department has chosen to evaluate excess capacity as a justification for BRAC.

Cost and Schedule Performance. Shipyards which have a demonstrated record for meeting cost and schedule requirements provide a high military value to the Navy. A facility which consistently delivers on-schedule and on-cost provides the Navy additional resources that can be used to support the warfighters requirements.

We also request that you provide to our offices the detailed subcriteria and their weighting that the Navy will be using to evaluate the shipyards. This information will provide transparency into the process while still protecting the data and analysis used to evaluate the specific installations.

Sincerely,

OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator



JUDD GREGG
United States Senator

SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator

JOHN E. SUNUNU
United States Senator

THOMAS H. ALLEN
United States Representative

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