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Joe Courtney  
Congress of the United States

2nd District, Connecticut

May 2, 2016

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The Honorable Melody A. Currey  
Commissioner  
Connecticut Department of Administrative Services  
165 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Commissioner Currey:

I am writing to follow up our dialogue on the state of Connecticut's long overdue efforts to upgrade the State Police shooting range and training facilities. As you know, one of the arguments that I raised in support of "co-location" of state police training at the Connecticut National Guard facility in East Haven is the benefit that full utilization of the range there would have in positively evaluating the site in any new Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process round. Coupled with the benefit of providing our state troopers with a modern training facility that is available today, I believe that the State Police's utilization of the range's available capacity further protects our state's military infrastructure from a future, potential base closing process.

The need for Connecticut to focus on this objectives was highlighted last week when the Department of Defense released a report to Congress outlining excess infrastructure by military branch, and renewing its call for Congress to authorize another BRAC round (copy attached). The report found that the Army has the highest percentage of excess facilities – 33 percent. The Air Force was listed at 32 percent, the Navy at 7 percent, and the Defense Logistics Agency at 12 percent.

It is important to note that both Reserve and National Guard facilities are included in this analysis and those installations are subject to a BRAC decision. Indeed, in 2005 as I am sure you recall, the Connecticut Air National Guard lost its A-10 flying mission and barely stayed open after the process ended. General Martin and his team in the ensuing eleven years have done an outstanding job building new infrastructure in Connecticut – largely with federal dollars – and reinvigorating the Guard's in flying missions with the assignment of eight C-130s at Windsor Locks.

As a member of the House Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee, I have had the honor to work closely with the Connecticut National Guard to support their ongoing efforts to rebuild and move forward from the last BRAC round. However, despite this boost in facilities, last week's report shows that the Army is looking to significantly downsize its footprint on the continental United States. Although Congress will likely reject BRAC outright this year (I support rejection), our state needs to be vigilant to protect Guard facilities like the East Haven shooting range, which was upgraded as a result of a \$12 million authorization I helped secure in 2008.

To this end, the East Haven Guard range has shown it can accommodate law enforcement by sharing its range with the FBI, the Criminal Defense Investigative Service, and the East Haven Police Department. Even with the existing military and law enforcement activities there still remains over 200 days of available time for the State Police to take advantage of. In addition, the state has the option to invest and co-locate structures on federal property. Indeed the State Police operate a radio tower at the Guard's Storm Ranch site and as you know Governor Malloy has wisely invested new infrastructure at the Groton submarine base – with the same objective of protecting its enduring mission from any new BRAC.

I applaud your decision to terminate the siting process in Willington and East Windsor. Hopefully this will allow a “fresh look” at all the options available to the state. The Pentagon's BRAC study I believe adds a sobering question to your efforts – and an opportunity to protect hard-fought gains to Connecticut's National Guard infrastructure.

As you know, I am always available to answer any questions about Connecticut's military sector as Ranking Member on the House Armed Services Committee Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Courtney". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress