

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 19, 2011

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon, Room 3E718
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Gates:

We write today to express our continued concern over the Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) recommendation #133. In particular, we believe the full implementation of BRAC #133 will have tremendously negative effects upon the transportation infrastructure and the provision of fire and emergency medical services (EMS) in northern Virginia.

As you know, BRAC #133 will relocate approximately 6,400 Department of Defense (DoD) personnel from leased office space, accessible by public transit, in northern Virginia to the Mark Center complex in Alexandria, VA, which is not proximate to any Metro station. Numerous reports, including the Army's own Transportation Management Plan (TMP), have concluded that the implementation of BRAC #133 will severely degrade the transportation infrastructure surrounding the Mark Center, causing failing levels of service. Further, without updated mutual aid agreements, local municipalities, whose resources are already constrained, will struggle to respond to a fire or medical emergency in a timely manner.

To address the tremendous transportation challenge BRAC #133 poses, Section 2704 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 (H.R. 6523) requires the Secretary of the Army to produce a transportation plan for BRAC #133 that maintains existing levels of service at six key intersections surrounding the site. The Army's TMP, as it exists today, fails to meet the standard imposed by Section 2704. Though we have serious doubts that the full implementation of BRAC #133 will lead to any result other than failing levels of service, the Army can mitigate this by implementing the following recommendations.

First, the DoD should immediately waive Defense Access Roads Program (DAR) criteria and fund the short- and medium-term transportation infrastructure improvements as recently recommended by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). According to VDOT's most recent analysis, without these improvements all six intersections identified by Section 2704 will experience failing levels of service. To be clear, even should funding be identified, ground would not be broken on any of the improvements until February 2012, five months after the full implementation of BRAC #133, and the short-term improvements would not be completed before December 2012.

Second, before the Mark Center is occupied, the DoD should agree to subsidize local transit which already provides service to stops surrounding the Mark Center. Currently, the Washington Headquarters Service (WHS) plans to pay for private shuttles to transport approximately 23% of its employees from surrounding Metro stops and the Pentagon. Subsidizing local transit options provided by the City of Alexandria (DASH) and WMATA would allow each to expand service to the Mark Center, serving the dual purpose of providing an additional transit option for DoD employees and reducing the number of single and multiple occupancy vehicles commuting to the site.

