



SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

APR 12 2007

The Honorable Edward G. Rendell
Governor of Pennsylvania
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Rendell:

This is in response to your letter of March 9, 2007, in which you asked that the Air Force partner with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in its plans to preserve the capabilities of Willow Grove NAS Joint Reserve Base.

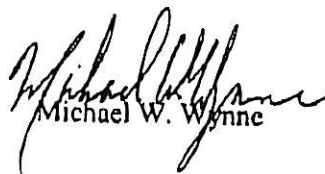
As you know, the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission recommended that the A-10 aircraft assigned to the 111th Fighter Wing (ANG) be distributed to other units. Subsequently, the Wing agreed to perform another AEF rotation, and the Navy agreed to continue operating the airfield during that period to accommodate that activity. It is planned that the aircraft distribution will be accomplished by 2010. In addition, the Air Force will be deactivating the 913th Airlift Wing (AFRES) in October 2007. Thus, in a few years the Air Force will have no operational requirement for the airfield. As recommended by the Commission, the 111th FW (ANG) and the 270th Engineering Installation Squadron (ANG) remaining at Willow Grove will be stationed in an Air Force-owned enclave compatible with joint use of the former Naval installation as a civilian airport.

On the other hand, Pennsylvania has proposed that Willow Grove be turned into what it calls a "joint interagency installation" that would serve the National Guard and Reserve units remaining there, as well as providing a location for other governmental agencies to support national defense, homeland security, and emergency preparedness missions. To facilitate this, Pennsylvania requests that the Air Force, which will have the two Air National Guard units remaining at Willow Grove, obtain the property from the Navy and concurrently lease or license it to the Commonwealth. Pennsylvania would assume full responsibility for the property it obtains from the Air Force, including the operational costs, and would ensure that the installation remains available to support continuing military and other governmental operations, including flying operations. In addition to your letter to the Air Force, Congressman Murtha has written to the Navy expressing support for this concept by both himself and Congresswoman Schwartz.

The Air Force is willing to continue to assist Pennsylvania with this vision, consistent with our long-term roles and responsibilities. Accordingly, the Air Force will request, pursuant to 32 C.F.R. Section 174.7, that the Navy transfer the remainder of the installation to the Air Force in support of a joint interagency installation supporting national defense, homeland security, and emergency preparedness. This will require review of the Office of the Secretary of Defense and approval of the Navy. Upon obtaining the property from the Navy, the Air Force will lease it to Pennsylvania, which immediately will assume responsibility, jurisdiction, and control over the property, including the costs of operating and maintaining it. Because the Air

Force lacks a long-term requirement for the additional property, the lease to Pennsylvania would be short-term, after which the Air Force would transfer title as soon as practicable to the Commonwealth. The Air Force will pay any costs attributed to operating its retained enclave property at Willow Grove and any costs attributed to any Air Force use of the property that is obtained for and leased to Pennsylvania. This arrangement will allow Pennsylvania to preserve the current military capabilities of the installation, permit possible joint use as a civilian airport, and provide time for Pennsylvania to attract other governmental users to the long-term missions envisioned for Willow Grove.

Sincerely,



Michael W. Wynne