

Commonwealth of Kentucky

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SENATOR WHITNEY H. WESTERFIELD

August 22, 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

As the Army considers significant cuts to its workforce, the communities surrounding Fort Knox, Kentucky have grave concern at the option being considered in the Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment that would see the Fort Knox workforce cut by 7,600. Unfortunately 3,500 of those 7,600 positions have already been eliminated with the inactivation of the 3/1 Brigade Combat Team.

First, I urge you to reconsider the census data used to inform the Assessment. Like every other military installation experiencing a deployment during a census, Fort Knox suffers from an inaccurate calculation methodology. The census counts soldiers that are deployed as being stationed at their home of record at the time of their deployment instead of being counted at their last known address which would be within the region of their current duty station. This methodology does not accurately illustrate the number of soldiers who actually live in these areas and will return when they redeploy. As a result, the estimated socioeconomic impact is artificially low for the specified ROI. We can safely assume the damage will be far greater.

I further encourage the Department of the Army to consider the severe economic impact these additional 4,100 proposed cuts would have. The worst case recommendation being evaluated would result in as much as a \$500 million loss in payroll. That is a conservative estimate that comes on the heels of the recent inactivation of the 3/1 Brigade Combat Team, which has already had a detrimental impact. In addition to the lost spending power in the local economy, the rental and housing market would be further negatively impacted. While the communities closest to Fort Knox would be hardest hit, it should be noted that the effect would be far reaching with a workforce that commutes from 39 counties and three states.

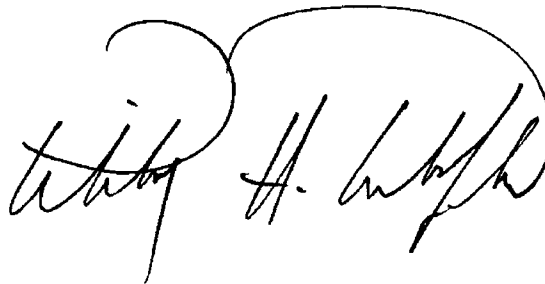
In addition, such cuts would overlook the commitment this region and the commonwealth made to prepare for BRAC 2005. In the midst of the Great Recession, Kentucky committed \$251 million in new schools, roads and other needed infrastructure investments to accommodate the anticipated growth. Colleges and universities established new curriculum to ensure local job seekers were prepared to fill any vacancies within the new commands. Community leaders traveled to relocating units to meet with the

workforce and answer questions. Local business and community organizations partnered to host hundreds of civilian employees and their families who were considering the move to Kentucky, a workforce the Army needed to move in order to meet its mission. Some 14 tours of more than 500 people were funded on the backs of local small business owners who wanted to show how welcoming our communities are.

Whether it was the business owner who drove 50 miles to deliver his mom's southern fried chicken to a tour group, or the governor and the legislators who, in tough economic times, invested hundreds of millions of dollars or every taxpayer who helped foot that bill, Kentucky's commitment to and support of Fort Knox cannot be overstated.

In fact, it is because of that commitment and the installation's many attributes that we recommend looking to Fort Knox as an ideal location to realize additional missions as a result of Army reorganization. The installation touts world class ranges, capacity for growth, net zero energy efforts, and a centralized location. That, coupled with the low cost of living, high quality of life, and this region's and state's proven commitment, makes Fort Knox an ideal and cost-effective location for new missions, not just for the Army but all branches of service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Whitney Westerfield". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long tail.

Whitney Westerfield
State Senator

pc: Senator Mitch McConnell
Senator Rand Paul
Representative Ed Whitfield
General Raymond T. Odierno, Chief of Staff of the US Army
John M. McHugh, Secretary of the Army