

JAMES P. MORAN
8TH DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

INTERIOR AND ENVIRONMENT
CHAIRMAN

DEFENSE

STATE FOREIGN OPERATIONS

DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND
POLICY COMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

2239 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4608
(202) 225-4376
FAX: (202) 225-0017

DISTRICT OFFICE:

333 N. FAIRFAX STREET
SUITE 201
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314
(703) 971-4700
FAX: (703) 922-9436

www.moran.house.gov

August 6, 2010

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

Dear Secretary Gates:

I write to express my continued grave concern with the planned relocation of 6,409 Department of Defense (DoD) personnel to the Mark Center in Alexandria, Virginia, as mandated by the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendation #133. Specifically, I believe that should the move occur on or before September 15, 2011 the influx of DoD personnel will cause failing overall levels of service (LOS) to local roadways and intersections, and I-395. Additionally, with little more than a year before the transition is to happen, the Army has yet to finalize a mutual aid agreement with the City of Alexandria for fire and emergency medical services (EMS), which endangers the safety of both DoD personnel and local residents.

As you know, the original 2005 BRAC recommendation #133 required relocating 6,409 DoD personnel currently occupying leased space in the National Capital Region (NCR) to Fort Belvoir, Virginia. In 2007, the DoD decided the move would be problematic when the Army's Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) found that the relocation to Fort Belvoir would cause three to four hours of severe congestion on and around the installation, which would also extend traffic along the I-95 corridor by up to two hours each peak traffic hour. Rather than paying the estimated \$446 million to implement traffic mitigating measures at Fort Belvoir, the DoD decided to seek an alternate location for BRAC #133, resulting in the eventual selection of the Mark Center.

The Mark Center development was an unsolicited bid offered by the Duke Realty Corporation. As part of the requirements for the solicitation, offerors were to provide a transportation plan demonstrating that the relocation would not cause unacceptable levels of service to the surrounding transportation infrastructure. Duke Realty's transportation plan, which has since proven to be substantially deficient, was accepted by the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) at face value and was the basis for the COE's 2008 Environmental Assessment (EA) finding of no significant impact (FONSI).

Unfortunately, exactly two years later, notwithstanding the fact that no significant development has occurred in the area during the interim, the Army COE has determined that relocating 6,409 DoD personnel to the Mark Center will cause failing levels of service to local roadways, intersections and I-395. The Army's Final Transportation Management Plan (TMP), released on July 31, 2010, found that even with a greater than forty percent reduction in single occupancy vehicles, "(overall) LOS at these locations deteriorated to an unacceptable E or F, with demand exceeding capacity." According to Table 4-18 of the TMP, three locations during AM peak hours and three locations during PM peak hours will degrade to an overall LOS E or F, the worst possible levels of traffic congestion.

The TMP's findings are consistent with three other traffic studies completed by the City of Alexandria and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT); specifically, the April 2009 VDOI "Mark Center (BRAC) Transportation Study," the City of Alexandria's November 2009 "Mark Center (BRAC 133) Transportation Study" and most recently the VDOI's December 2009 "Mark Center (BRAC 133) Access Study." In fact, the December 2009 VDOI study's conclusions are more grave than those of the TMP. It predicts a higher number of intersections will suffer overall failing levels of service, complete gridlock in the immediate vicinity of the facility and far more extensive congestion along I-395. Given that the December 2009 VDOI study was more comprehensive in its area analysis as well as more detailed in its modeling, I frankly have more faith in the VDOI study than the Army's TMP.

The DoD relocation to the Mark Center will undoubtedly delay tens of thousands of commuters to Washington in the morning and a comparable number returning home on I-395 in the evening. The toll on the federal workforce in terms of lost productivity, not to mention quality of life issues such as expanded work day, day care pickups, etc., is difficult to quantify but hard to overstate.

In addition to my very serious concerns with transportation, I am alarmed to learn that the Army does not yet have a plan for the provision of fire and emergency medical services at the Mark Center. In a recent letter to my office from Lieutenant General Rick Lynch, Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, he wrote: "the Army is working with the City of Alexandria to develop a mutual aid agreement for the Mark Center." Unfortunately, in a meeting on August 3, 2010, a senior Army official was not fully aware of Lt. Gen. Lynch's commitment

According to the City of Alexandria, no official from the Army has engaged in substantive discussions to conclude the mutual aid agreement referenced by Lt. Gen. Lynch. Today, the City of Alexandria's resources are already fully utilized in responding to the volume of emergency calls in the area surrounding the Mark Center. Though the city is taking substantive steps to increase its fire/EMS capacity, the occupation of the Mark Center by DoD personnel, as well as the unique nature of the buildings, will clearly cause an especial burden upon already stretched city resources.

Today, we are thirteen months from the statutory BRAC deadline of September 15, 2011. Before the Mark Center site is occupied, I ask that you personally ensure that the relocation does not cause failing levels of service E or F to any directly affected roadway or intersection. Second, to ensure both the safety of DoD personnel and the surrounding communities, I ask that you instruct the Army to conclude a mutual aid agreement with the City of Alexandria for the provision of fire/EMS at the Mark Center as soon as possible.

I cannot overemphasize my concern that the BRAC #133 relocation will have detrimental effects for the citizens and workforce of northern Virginia. As you are aware, I am working to prevent the predicted outcomes of this ill-advised BRAC relocation and I hope you will join me in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Moran". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

James P. Moran

CC: Dr. Dorothy Robyn, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations and Environment)
CC: Honorable Katherine Hammack, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Installations & Environment)
CC: Mayor Bill Euille
CC: Vice Mayor Kerry Donley

JPM/cg