

Jackie Henderson

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From: Merrittapprais@aol.com
Sent: Friday, June 24, 2011 1:51 PM
To: William Euille; Kerry Donley; Rob Krupicka; Del Pepper; paulcsmedberg@aol.com; Frank Fannon; Alicia Hughes
Cc: Michele Evans; stephen.haering@vdh.virginia.gov; Jackie Henderson
Subject: BRAC and Emergency and Fire Services
Attachments: PHACLetteronEMSDRAFT062111.docx

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members

Attached you will find a letter that was endorsed by the Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission at its most recent meeting on June 16, 2011. The letter identifies some specific concerns of the Commission regarding the potential impact of BRAC on emergency and fire response services in the City of Alexandria.

Thank you very much for your attention to these issues.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Merritt
Acting Chair, Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission

June 21, 2011

The Honorable William D. Euille
Vice Mayor Kerry J. Donley
Councilman K. Rob Krupicka
Councilman Frank H. Fannon, IV
Councilwoman Redella S. Pepper
Councilman Paul C. Smedberg
Councilwoman Alicia R. Hughes
301 King St., Room 2300
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members:

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) sets globally-recognized standards for the prevention of and response to potentially life-threatening safety issues within a community or organization. Of the more than 300 codes and standards currently maintained by NFPA, we are writing to you today about one, NFPA 1710: Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments.

NFPA 1710 requires that first-arriving apparatus and appropriate staffing must arrive at an emergency scene within four minutes of departure from the station. This travel allocation does not include the time required for citizens to access 911 systems, dispatch, and in-station crew response. It does, however, account for traffic, community geography, and weather. The standard says that departments must meet this objective 90 percent of the time.

We understand that the City of Alexandria does not currently meet this standard, and that in some West End fire response areas, it is significantly off the mark. BRAC-133 will dramatically exacerbate these problems. Specifically:

- **West End Response:** The response areas for stations 206 and 208 are among the busiest in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The units at these stations must cover a large, population-dense geographic area and typically are utilized 15 percent more than units in other areas within the City. Within the West End, responding units meet the four-minute travel time requirements just 70 percent of the time.

During emergency events affecting the entire region, such as severe weather events, City and mutual aid units are routinely stretched to the breaking point, with the dispatch system needing to call upon units from as far away as Herndon, Virginia to respond to emergencies within the City.

We understand that the City does employ a Peak-Time Medic Unit to reduce the impact of Peak-Time usage. That said, travel time and overall response time is exceedingly high in the West End of the City, creating an unsafe environment for residents and emergency services professionals.

- BRAC-133: As noted, there are already significant concerns with the response time to emergencies in the West End. The traffic congestion created by BRAC-133 will significantly exacerbate these problems. According to the Transportation & Environmental Services Department, traffic congestion resulting from Mark Center will increase response times in the impact area by between four-and-a-half and nine minutes.

Note that the increase response time will not only increase the waiting time for a resident in urgent need, but will also hold units out of service for longer – creating an even greater shortage of available responders.

We do understand that the City, City Council, and BRAC-133 Advisory Group are taking steps to address these issues. That said, the City does have additional courses of action available to accelerate solutions to these problems. Steps should include:

- Continuation and acceleration of Station 210 on Eisenhower Avenue. The completion of Station 210 will reduce the number of trips Station 208 units currently make to the transportation-constricted south side of the train tracks. This will increase the availability of those units to respond to the impact areas.
- Accelerated development of Station 211 in the Beauregard-Seminary area. The City should approve plans for Station 211, and ensure that a medic unit is among those included at the new facility. This station will provide a critical and currently missing response infrastructure to residents west of I-395 and significantly reduce the impact of BRAC-133 and other future development.

We recommend that the city work with the Department of Defense along with the regional Congressional delegation to reduce or offset the overall cost of the construction, maintenance and operations of Station 211. Another option would be to secure developer funding to construct a new Station 211, similar to the model used to construct Station 209 in Potomac Yard.

This letter was endorsed unanimously by the eight members (identified below) of the Public Health Advisory Commission who attended the June 16, 2011 Commission meeting.

Sincerely,

Robin Adams
Arlene Hewitt
Gene Kendall
Andrew LaVanway

Richard Merritt, Chair
Mark Penn
Mary Anne Weber
Michael Wiener