

WASHINGTON- Congressman Spencer Bachus today sent a letter to House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter requesting that he hold a hearing on the Base Realignment and Closure Commission's decision to realign the 117th Air Refueling Wing and 22 similarly situated air units.

Congressman Bachus was joined by members of the Alabama, Delaware, Michigan, Missouri and Ohio delegations. Some of the concerns the letter expressed were:

Â· While Congress deemed "military value" to be the overriding factor upon which the BRAC recommendations were to be based, six Air National Guard Tanker wings determined to have less military value than Birmingham are remaining in place with some seeing an increase in aircraft.

Â· To date, \$73 million has been spent on Birmingham's infrastructure to make it a world-class tanker base. There is currently space to bed down 13 aircraft, and next year the Birmingham International Airport runway will be lengthened to 12,000 feet, yielding an increased capability that is greater than that of any of the airports to which the 117th ARW aircraft are to be relocated.

Â· The ability of "enclave" bases to sustain expeditious combat units is not clear.

Once flying units are removed, many bases will no longer be able to support military or civilian aircraft operations, and recruitment and retention could be made more difficult.

It is anticipated that another letter, detailing more specific concerns with additional Congressional support, will be sent to Chairman Hunter next week.

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