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The Del Rio Chamber of Commerce

JAMES R. THACKER, MANAGER

P. O. Box 1078

Del Rio, Texas

May 3, 1961

*File under
Del Rio
Base*

Dr. H. P. Garcia
3024 Morgan Street
Corpus Christi, Texas

Dear Dr. Garcia:

Through our mutual friend, Mr. Ernest Casillas, here in Del Rio we have learned of your interest in our local problem concerning the proposed closing of Laughlin Air Force Base. Mr. Casillas requested that I furnish you with information regarding this.

Mr. McNamara, Secretary of Defense, in closing the fifty-two military installations in the United States referred to them as old and obsolete bases, but including Laughlin in this category is a 100% error. Our base is a completely new one built from the ground up since 1952 with 500 beautiful new air-conditioned Capehart houses built on the base in 1960, new hangars, a bowling alley just now being completed, and new service clubs. In fact, I could go on and on naming the many new buildings built as recently as the last two years. The Air Force which, by the way, was not even consulted on this decision has often referred to Laughlin as a model Air Force base and one at which any command would be proud to be stationed.

In regard to the economic impact that we expect if the base is closed, we think it is going to completely wreck the economy of Del Rio. Our city has grown mainly due to Laughlin Air Force Base being named a permanent installation. There are several hundred civilian employees at the base. Records show we will lose 50% of the students from our school system which will completely destroy it. We expect to lose approximately 8,000 people in all out of our town. In fact, it is just hard to believe when we try to analyze the future really how bad it is going to be.

We think the Defense Department has made a mistake. It is going to be a complete waste of the taxpayers money to liquidate this brand new \$130,000,000 military installation, one of the few of its kind in the entire Air Force. We know of several really old bases that, if they are going to close bases, they should close before closing Laughlin. We are exerting every effort to prevail on the Defense Department to please reconsider their decision, and we think that if they do this, they cannot possibly close such a beautiful Air Force base.

Dr. H. P. Garcia Page 2 (Continued)

Any help that you can give us will be greatly appreciated by everyone in Del Rio.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Philip A. Ricks". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Philip A. Ricks
Chairman
Keep Laughlin Campaign

PAR:jll

cc: Mr. Ernest Casillas
1107 Griner Street
Del Rio, Texas