



PHIL BRYANT  
GOVERNOR

March 2, 2016

The Honorable Tate Reeves  
P.O. Box 1018  
Jackson, MS 39215

The Honorable Phillip Gunn  
Room 306  
P.O. Box 1018  
Jackson, MS 39215

Dear Lt. Governor Reeves and Speaker Gunn:

As the Department of Defense plans for a possible base realignment and closure (BRAC) round in 2019, I am writing to request that \$15 million from the negotiated settlement for economic damages from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill be set aside to support a new gate and access route on Division Street in Biloxi for Keesler Air Force Base.

Over 10,000 military and civilian personnel move through Keesler and positively impact the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Base commanders and local leadership have identified opening a new, secure gate complex on Division Street as a priority. Base security must be taken seriously at all times, but particularly in the post-9/11 era, the real or perceived lack of secure access points could put our military bases at risk for closure.

Funding a new gate and access route at Division Street must be a joint effort by the state and our federal delegation. The total cost of a new gate and improvements to Division Street is estimated to be \$37 million. We are currently working with the delegation on options for the U.S. Air Force to cover a portion of the gate costs, with the Mississippi Development Authority filling any gaps from the Base Enhancement program, which the Legislature created in the 1990's. It should also be noted, that the Mississippi Development Authority has asked for \$5 million in their bond bill request for the Base Enhancement program in order to mitigate other risks and enhance opportunities at other bases in the run-up to a possible BRAC in 2019. The improvements necessary to make Division Street an acceptable new entrance corridor is currently unfunded. Allocating a small portion of the \$150 million in BP economic damages

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money that will come to the state for Keesler is absolutely appropriate, particularly since it's located on the gulf coast.

Mississippi is home to a large military community and our bases play a vital role in training men and women who go into harm's way. Furthermore our state's economy benefits by the multiplier effect from the bases such as defense industry partners, infrastructure, and human capital. It is for these reasons that every effort must be made to strengthen our military bases and to reduce base closure risks in our state. I look forward to working with both of you in the months ahead on this issue. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Phil Bryant". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Phil Bryant  
GOVERNOR