



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

February 22, 2010

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-0504

Dear Senator Feinstein:

This is a follow up to my letter of December 3, 2009 and our phone conversation on February 22, 2010, regarding a Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA) proposal to construct and operate a multi-lane highway across Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California. The most recent proposal has been carefully reviewed and I have received the recommendations of the Under Secretary and the Acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Installations and Environment, as well as the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Based upon the thorough review and the fact that Camp Pendleton training is already constrained by environmental and other restrictions, I have determined that the proposed new TCA route would unacceptably impact the Marine Corps' ability to train and prepare for all contingency operations.

The proposed route would eliminate a substantial portion of the Sierra Training Area. This not only impacts current pre-deployment combat training, but also restricts the Marine Corps' ability to adapt training type and tempo to meet emergent requirements and the expansion of end strength directed by the Congress. The proposed route would require restrictive safety measures that would limit the use of pyrotechnics and simulated munitions, impose significant restrictions on convoy operations, and eliminate key supporting aviation operations. Additionally, this new proposal would significantly reduce training realism in other training areas due to the proximity of a major highway and the required standoff distances needed to conduct training on the associated ranges.

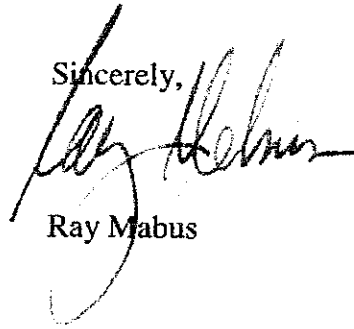
The Sierra Training Area is unique at Camp Pendleton; it is one of the few relatively flat areas on the base that is largely unencumbered by endangered species restrictions. Consequently, it is one of the few areas on Camp Pendleton where tactical units may conduct unencumbered, realistic off road pre-deployment combat convoy training and combat engineer operations. These attributes cannot be replicated elsewhere on the base. As a result, the Sierra Training Area is used throughout the year for small unit tactics, land navigation, improvised explosive device training, field operations and training support activities. We expect future training uses to include new critical training with heavy equipment, the Assault Breacher Vehicle and the Joint Assault Bridger, as well as Military Operations in Urban Terrain, Convoy Operations and Counter

disturbance activities, which can only be accomplished on those areas with no or few environmental restrictions.

The land available for Camp Pendleton's training mission is already severely burdened by encroachment pressures from the presence of endangered species and associated habitats, utility crossings, highways, electrical power generation facilities and parkland. Introducing new constraints and eliminating training areas not presently encumbered further restricts our current capability, limits our ability to train for new unknown challenges, places unacceptable present and future restrictions on our ability to prepare Marines for the fight, and creates unacceptable risk to our critical combat readiness mission and the lives of Marines heading into battle.

Thank you for your interest in this matter. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Mabus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Ray Mabus