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Senator Dianne Feinstein

of California

Senator Feinstein Seeks New Criteria in Base Closure Decisions

Wants California's Past Contributions in Previous Base Closures to Be a Factor

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Washington, DC – Following the announcement of draft selection criteria for the upcoming round of base closures, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today requested the Department of Defense to revise its evaluation criteria so that the commission considers the large number of bases already closed in California and other factors that argue against closing additional California bases.

In previous rounds of closures, 31 bases and military installations have been closed in California. Senator Feinstein believes that California has “done its fair share”, and she, working with other members of the California Congressional Delegation, will continue to look for ways to prevent further closures in the State.

Specifically, Senator Feinstein urged the Department to consider:

- The value of intellectual capital and the synergy created between the military, academia, and the private sector;
- The need to maintain long term testing facilities and operational ranges, which accommodate both individual and joint forces;
- California's substantial contribution to the streamlining of our military's base structure in past rounds; and
- The Impact of closure of installations and locations in foreign nations.

The text of Senator Feinstein's letter to Director of Base Realignment and Closure Peter Potochney follows:

“I am writing to you in regards to the recently published criteria for the upcoming round of base closures and realignments.

After reviewing the draft selection criteria, comparing previous criteria language and comments from my constituency, there are several significant issues needed to be incorporated in the military value section of the criteria:

- Recognition of the value of intellectual capital and the synergy created between the military, academia, and the private sector which allows the service to have instant access to the most advance technology and training to carry out their mission. A skilled civilian workforce

cannot always be moved or duplicated in another region. An attempt to realign the Monterey Defense Language Institute, for example, failed due to the lack of support from its academic faculty.

- Recognition of the need to maintain long term testing facilities and operational ranges, which accommodate both individual and joint forces. In turn, these ranges and facilities need to be in close proximity to major surface and air routes, sea space storage, along with maintenance and repair capabilities.
- Recognition of California's substantial contribution to the streamlining of our military's base structure in past rounds. In the past four rounds, California lost 31 of its military bases – 20 percent of all bases affected by BRAC -- and more jobs than all other states combined.

In addition, I understand that there has been discussion about the possibility that facilities selected for closure may not be immediately cleaned up and turned over for re-use, but instead held for potential reactivation in the future. Given that such facilities may fall into disrepair, and smaller communities around them could change and would be blocked from redeveloping the land, it is important the criteria for such decisions be clear and precise.

Lastly, with 702 Department of Defense installations and locations in foreign nations, it just as important that the services assess military facility structures overseas and not solely at home in the next round of base closures and realignments. In this regard, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) and I introduced the Overseas Military Facility Structure Review Act of 2003 to provide the Defense Department the necessary tools to make a true assessment of their facility structure. It became law as a part of the Fiscal Year 2004 Military Construction Appropriations bill.

I appreciate your consideration as you review this important issue that will have a major effect not only on local communities across the nation, but the future of the Armed Forces. It is essential the criteria outline a clear direction, so to properly guide the BRAC Commission.”

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