

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1605 LONGWORTH HOB
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-8045
FAX: (202) 225-9073

CHULA VISTA OFFICE
333 F STREET, SUITE A
CHULA VISTA, CA 91910
(619) 422-5963
FAX: (619) 422-7290

VARGAS.HOUSE.GOV



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Juan Vargas
51st District, California

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
TERRORISM, NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES AND
RISK MANAGEMENT
HORTICULTURE, RESEARCH, BIOTECHNOLOGY
AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

May 8, 2013

The Honorable Howard P. McKeon, Chairman
The Honorable Adam Smith, Ranking Member
House Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014. There are several priorities I would like to bring to the Committee's attention that are important to my district and to the security of our nation.

As the United States continues to "rebalance" our efforts to the Asia-Pacific, we must provide the adequate resources to our global commitments, particularly by investing in our naval capabilities. My district is home to Naval Base San Diego (NBSD), which is the largest Navy base on the West Coast and provides comprehensive fleet support for 58 home ported ships and 180 tenant commands. The economic benefit to my district and the surrounding community cannot be overstated, with military funding supporting thousands of jobs in the greater San Diego County area. As the Navy's premier Pacific Fleet surface force installation, NBSD has played an integral role in the Global War on Terrorism and will be a strategic asset as we expand our presence in the Pacific. In order to fulfill this mission, I request from your committee that the Navy remain a key priority in the NDAA for FY 2014. This would include funding for base operations and the maintenance and modernization of ships, and building a strong research and development core to support technological innovation.

Last month, I introduced H.R. 1691, the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range Security Enhancement Act, which would transfer the administrative jurisdiction of certain public lands in the Chocolate Mountain Gunnery Range from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the Secretary of the Navy. Due to the current checkerboard pattern of administrative jurisdiction, I believe this bill offers the necessary solution to the existing land withdrawal and cooperative management arrangement between BLM and the Department of the Navy. Approximately 227,000 acres of withdrawn public land is set to expire on October 31, 2014. Consolidating the land management under a sole federal agency would provide regulatory relief and certainty to the Department of the Navy while maintaining the spirit of the land withdrawal

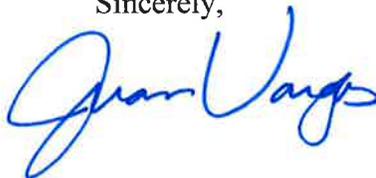
program. This bill preserves the environmental integrity of the land and supports our national security interest. I look forward to working with this committee to ensure that H.R. 1691 is included in the FY 2014 NDAA.

Additionally, the Department of the Navy is currently seeking to replace the aging Navy Pacific Fleet FA-18 aircraft with the F-35C aircraft. Two potential locations are being examined to homebase the F-35C in the Naval Pacific Fleet. Of the two alternatives being analyzed, I believe that the Naval Air Facility (NAF) El Centro, in my district, offers the Navy a fiscally sound option along with world class operations and facilities. Located in the heart of Southern California's Imperial Valley, NAF El Centro's close proximity to San Diego's Pacific Fleet and Yuma, Arizona's Marine Joint Strike Fighter has allowed it to be an integral part in Naval Aviation Training. Before any final decision is made, I would request that this committee consider the long-term comparative operational cost of both alternatives. During these difficult budget times, we must ensure that we make fiscally responsible choices that maintain our national security while protecting the taxpayer.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to express my concerns with the effects of this year's sequestration cuts will have on our military readiness, on our support for our allies, and on the lives of the men and women who proudly and honorably serve in the armed services. Many of the personnel who live and work in my district have faced furloughs and worry about any future pay decreases. We must keep our commitments to the men and women in uniform, and their families, by authorizing the pay they deserve and have earned. I also urge this committee to continue to support our key ally Israel by buttressing our cooperative missile defense program. Israel is faced with a very difficult security situation and cuts to programs, such as the Iron Dome, hinder its ability to protect the Israeli people. Lastly, and most importantly, in light of the Pentagon's recent report on the rise of sexual assault in the military, I would kindly request that this committee continue to work in a bipartisan fashion to provide new regulations and procedures to combat and prosecute these terrible acts. The FY 2014 NDAA should reinstate all funding for resources to deal with sexual assault within the military.

Thank you for your consideration of these priorities and for your leadership in providing for our common defense. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information in support of these requests.

Sincerely,



JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress
51st District, California