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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0526

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE,
SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SPACE

October 20, 2014

The Honorable Buck McKeon
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0001

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Committee on Armed Services
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0001

Dear Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith:

As the House Armed Services Committee continues to work with the Senate to finalize the National Defense Authorization Act for 2015, I write to urge the Committee to maintain robust support for our existing naval test ranges, the E-2D Hawkeye, the MQ-4C Triton, and the MQ-8 Fire Scout. I also urge the Committee to retain the House language prohibiting any new round of a Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC).

As the proud representative of Naval Base Ventura County, I represent over 19,000 personnel that work hard every day to keep our nation secure. With approximately 80 tenant commands, Naval Base Ventura County is a strategic asset to our national security, and will play an even greater role in our national defense as the Department of Defense continues to re-focus and shift attention towards the Asia-Pacific region.

Naval Base Ventura County is also home to our Pacific Seabees, the United States Navy Construction Battalion (CB). Since World War II, the Seabees have built military bases, bulldozing and paving thousands of miles of roadway and airstrips, which have been integral to the success of the U.S. armed forces in combat theaters world-wide. Our highly-skilled and specially trained Seabees can rapidly deploy and prepare for various overseas contingencies, including humanitarian assistance missions.

Naval Base Ventura County -- comprising a total of over 19,000 land acres, plus a 36,000 square mile Sea Range -- provides the Navy with a diverse and expansive training area, helping prepare our sailors for a wide-variety of situations that they may encounter across the globe.

As you know, the Navy's Test and Evaluation Support program provides institutional maintenance and operations support for research, development, test, and evaluation at the Navy's major range and test facilities, including Naval Base Ventura County. These facilities are critical components for maintaining our military's technological advantage by fielding safe and effective military capabilities in support of our national defense.

Because of its important role in our defense strategy, I also urge the Committee to maintain the national commitment to Naval Base Ventura County by supporting several programs important to the base.

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First, I urge the Committee to authorize the highest possible level of funds for the MQ-4C Triton system. The Navy MQ-4C Triton is a next-generation unmanned aircraft system that will provide the best maritime intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance coverage available to the Navy. The MQ-4C Triton will also help our Navy maintain its strategic military edge over our adversaries. The Triton system will not only provide maritime intelligence information to our naval fleets, but also support homeland security, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief activities. Therefore, I urge the committee to continue its support for research, development, test and evaluation of the MQ-4C Triton and for procurement of this aircraft.

Second, as co-chair of the E-2D Hawkeye Caucus, I also request the Committee authorize the highest possible level of support for procurement of the E-2D Hawkeye in FY2015. The E-2D Hawkeye has a unique ability to expand radar surveillance at a wider range for our Naval fleet, protecting our naval personnel and our ships from threats across the globe. Just this week, the Navy declared the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye operational and indicated that the Navy was prepared to move forward with plans to replace legacy aircraft in each squadron by 2027. It is critically important that Congress continue to support procurement of the aircraft to meet the Navy's operational requirements.

Third, I urge the Committee to continue its ongoing support for research, development, test, and evaluation and for procurement of the MQ-8 Fire Scout, which provides real-time Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), target-acquisition, laser designation, and battle management to tactical users. As you know, there are two variants, the MQ-8B and the larger MQ-8C. I urge the Committee to continue to support both variants, which are critical to ongoing counter-IED missions in Afghanistan and for other global missions as the MQ-8 is deployed on our Littoral combat ships.

Finally, as we continue to draw down forces from our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, I understand the need to identify excess infrastructure and cost-savings opportunities within the Department of Defense. However, I believe facilities outside the United States and its territories should be considered for closure. Nearly 70 years after the end of World War II, we have bases across the globe, many of which are outdated and do not reflect our current, and future, defense needs.

As the House Armed Services Committee finalizes the National Defense Authorization Act for 2015, I urge the Committee to include language in the conference agreement, similar to the language in the 2014 NDAA that I supported, prohibiting any new round of a Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC).

Thank you for your work on these critical issues. I appreciate the Committee's continued willingness to listen to the views of those Members of Congress, including myself, who represent our proud military personnel at bases across the country. I look forward to working with you to ensure the 2015 NDAA supports the critical missions of our armed forces, and maintains our solemn obligation to our servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

Sincerely,



JULIA BROWNLEY
Member of Congress