



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT/WESTERN RECRUITING REGION
1600 HENDERSON AVENUE, SUITE 238
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92140-5001

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April 18, 2008

The Honorable Jerry Sanders
Mayor, City of San Diego
City Administration Building
202 C Street, 11th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Mayor Sanders:

SUBJECT: LAND USE ISSUES, THE MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT AND
SAN DIEGO AIRPORT

Over the past several months, there has been considerable discussion about the Airport Master Plan and the independent plan put forward by Mr. Steve Peace from the California Independent Voter Project (CalVP) and Mr. Carl Nettleton from Vision for San Diego Waterfront. It is my understanding that both believe the Airport Master Plan CEQA process should be delayed until a thorough examination of the property between Pacific Highway, I-5, Laurel Street and Washington Street, and the northern portion of the Airport is completed. According to this independent plan, all of this property could be developed into an Intermodal Transportation Center, the relocation of airport rental car agencies, and a north terminal. The development of a north terminal involves the U.S. Marine Corps because this plan, as currently envisioned, includes the construction of a north taxiway, the original Option C as developed by the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority (SDCRAA), requiring about 27 acres of Marine Corps property.

MCRD San Diego has set in place significant modifications of its internal footprint to support increased training demand. These changes are being driven by Congress' direction to "Grow the Force," increasing our active duty numbers from our current strength of approximately 186,000 to 202,000 necessary for national defense. This translates into increased numbers of recruits, thereby putting even more of a premium on existing MCRDSD land. In 2007, more than 19,000 new Marines graduated from MCRDSD. We expect to graduate more than 21,000 new Marines by the end of fiscal year 2008.

At the most recent San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors' meeting, I directed my representative to ask that the following statement from me be read into the record:

The Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego values the strong and healthy relationships it enjoys with the City of San Diego and the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority. The Marine Corps Recruit Depot is also a critical component of the National Defense in that we train over 50% of the young men that join our Corps each year.

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The Base Realignment and Closure Commission has repeatedly confirmed the validity of our mission, facilities, and location. The City, SANDAG, and the Airport Authority are faced with some challenging decisions. I would like to clarify some issues that may assist in that effort. Over the years, we have willingly given up and allowed the use of excess Marine Corps real estate to support regional demands, including the airport. We have no more excess to give. I know that many of you have heard about a possible land deal which was on the table a number of years ago. That deal was proposed as a swap. It was not consummated, and the Depot land under consideration has since been completely integrated into our training support plans - it is actively being used to train new Marines.

Additionally, the land that was proposed to be passed to the Depot in that exchange is the very property that is now being considered for further development by the airport. In short, MCRDSD property is a national defense resource that should not be considered as part of the solution to resolve airport land use issues.

I made this statement for three reasons: one, to provide accurate information regarding the land transfer being discussed in the press; to reiterate the strong relationship the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego has with the City and the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority; and third, and most importantly, to confirm the criticality of this installation to the Marine Corps and DoD in contributing to the defense of this Nation. While the Marine Corps remains committed to being a "good neighbor" and continuing this relationship with both the City and the Airport, we are obligated to ensure that MCRDSD remains capable of meeting its mission in support of the defense of our Nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "A. Salinas", written over a circular embossed seal.

A. SALINAS
Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding General