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Congress of the United States
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COMMITTEES:
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July 14, 2010

Joseph F. Calcara
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Installations and Environment
United States Army
110 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0110

Dear Secretary Calcara:

I write regarding former Naval Station Roosevelt Roads (NSRR) in Ceiba, Puerto Rico. In September 2009, the Navy transferred to the Army a parcel of land within the NSRR that includes the Seals Operations Building and its surrounding area. This transfer took place despite concerns raised by me and other officials in Puerto Rico about its potentially detrimental effect on the redevelopment of NSRR. I wish to reiterate those concerns and to request a meeting with you to discuss them further in the hope that we can work together to find a mutually-agreeable solution.

On August 20, 2009, prior to the transfer, I wrote to Secretary Geren, copying you, to express concern about the Army's decision to request that the Navy transfer to the Army Reserve the parcel in question. At the time, the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) responsible for designing a reuse plan for the NSRR opposed the transfer because it was considering various proposals to develop the NSRR's dry dock for commercial use—and transfer of the property to the Army Reserve would have rendered such development impossible.

On September 9, 2009, you responded to my letter, stating that transfer of this property would “provide the Army the ability to implement BRAC 2005, relieve over-crowding of existing facilities, and enhance Army training and readiness on land adjacent to our current facilities in a compact, secure, and contiguous training property.” Your letter further stated that the alternative sites offered by the LRA were not “suitable” for use by the Army Reserve. Accordingly, despite the concerns raised by the Executive Director of the LRA and myself, the property transfer went forward as planned.

In April 2010, the LRA submitted to the Navy BRAC Project Management Office a comprehensive Addendum to the 2004 Reuse Plan that had originally been presented by the government of Puerto Rico. While the new reuse plan does not seek to develop the dry dock for

maritime or industrial use as had previously been contemplated, it does propose to utilize the dry dock's attractive waterfront location.

The concerns raised in my August 2009 letter remain salient. I am advised by the Executive Director of the LRA that the new reuse plan set forth in the Addendum could be severely impaired by the Army Reserve's presence on this property, particularly if that presence is further expanded. As reflected in the attached map, pursuant to the transfer, the Army Reserve is currently in possession of property that sits at the confluence of several key development zones envisioned in the Addendum, namely Zone 2 (the "Caribbean Riviera," a proposed entertainment, lodging and gaming tourist destination that would serve as the economic engine of the redeveloped property), Zone 3 ("El Yunque Grande," a proposed eco-tourism resort and residential area that would take advantage of the distinctive waterfront setting and harbor), and Zone 4 ("Marsh Vista," a proposed eco-friendly golf course and residential development).

These three initiatives, if brought to fruition, are expected to generate considerable revenue and to create approximately 9,500 new jobs in the retail, tourism and hospitality sectors. For Puerto Rico, which currently has an unemployment rate of 16.9%—well higher than any state—these potential jobs represent nothing less than a lifeline. This is especially true for residents living in the Island's eastern region, where the economy has undergone severe hardship since NSRR closed in 2004 after more than half a century in operation.

I am a forceful advocate for the men and women of the U.S. military, particularly in light of the enormous contribution made by residents of Puerto Rico to our national defense over many generations. However, just as I recognize the Army's need to ensure unit readiness and force protection, I hope that the Army appreciates the capacity of this property to improve the lives of my constituents. I trust you share my view that all reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that the Army's presence does not unduly compromise the site's extraordinary economic potential.

Accordingly, I respectfully request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience. I would like to work together to identify a solution that will, on the one hand, enable the Army to meet its legitimate needs and, on the other hand, minimize to the greatest extent feasible the adverse impact that the Army's presence could have upon the plan for economic development and job creation set forth in the Addendum.

Sincerely,



Pedro R. Pierluisi
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Luis G. Fortuño, Governor of Puerto Rico
Cecilia Muñoz, Director, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
Patrick O'Brien, Director, Office of Economic Adjustment, Department of Defense
Erwin Kiess, Executive Director, Local Redevelopment Authority



“Marsh Vista”

Conservation Trust

Army Reserve

“El Yunque Grande”

“Caribbean Riviera”

“Port Caribe”

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