

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 1, 2008

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Defense
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Defense
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Stevens:

We are writing to respectfully encourage the Committee to appropriate at least \$75 million in Fiscal Year 2009 for the Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) within the Operations and Maintenance, Defense-wide account.

Congress and the Department of Defense (DOD) recognized several years ago that accelerating development, population growth, and loss of habitat on non-military lands pose a growing threat to military readiness and to the development and fielding of future weapon systems. Accordingly, in the FY 2003 National Defense Authorization Act Congress provided the Secretary of Defense and the Secretaries of the Military Departments with new authorities to partner with state and local governments and conservation organizations in establishing buffer zones to protect testing and training areas around the country. The Secretary of Defense implemented this authority by establishing the Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI).

The REPI program has already proven to be a great success. In Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006, DOD used REPI authority to provide over \$49 million to support installation projects and to leverage over \$106 million in partner funds. Congress and DOD provided an additional \$40 million in FY 2007 and \$46 million in FY 2008, and these funds are leveraging significant additional funding from partners. Since FY 2005, REPI-funded projects have been or are being implemented at more than 40 installations and ranges throughout the country, including National Guard installations in several states. An additional 10-15 installations are expected to initiate projects in the next few months.

Recent DOD and RAND Corporation assessments have validated the effectiveness of REPI, but they indicate that the program needs additional resources to meet the challenges that encroachment is posing to military installations and ranges. The RAND report, entitled "The Thin Green Line," concluded that the REPI program is underfunded, that opportunities for effective action to protect bases are being lost, and that the cost of effective action will only

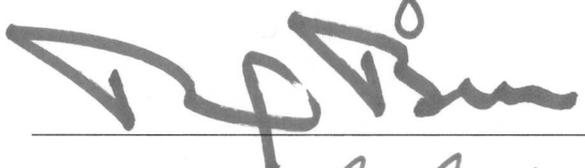
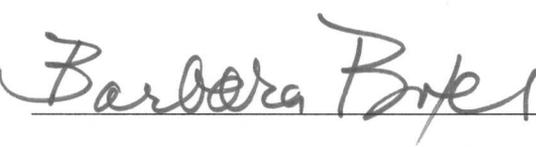
increase over time as developmental pressures intensify. Section 2828 of the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act recognized the findings of these reports through a "Sense of Congress" and directed DOD to address them.

In addition to the statutory and policy guidance that the House and Senate have provided DOD on encroachment issues in recent years, Congress has taken several steps to increase funding for REPI. We appreciate your leadership in helping increase FY 2008 funding for the program to \$46 million, \$16 million above the Pentagon's budget request. This year, the Administration requested \$40 million and featured the program prominently in its budget request of Congress. While we share the view that the Pentagon should advertise the results that REPI is delivering, we also believe that the proposed funding level is far too low to effectively meet the challenges that encroachment is posing at military installations around the country.

In our view, REPI needs to be funded at a level of at least \$75 million in FY 2009 if it is to continue to be successful in addressing encroachment, preserving the readiness of our Armed Forces, and ensuring the long range sustainability of our installations, ranges, and airspace. We respectfully encourage the Committee to fund the Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative at this level.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of our request. We look forward to continuing to work with you to support this important program.

Sincerely,

Rabot Meneung.

Don Coleman
