



COUNTY OF ORANGE  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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**June 12, 2003**

**The Honorable Norman Mineta  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
400 7<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20590**

Dear Secretary Mineta:

Last week the Los Angeles Times published a tremendous story about the former MCAS El Toro. The article described Los Angeles Mayor Jim Hahn's proposal to lease the El Toro property from the federal government for the purpose of having Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) construct and operate a badly needed state-of-the-art commercial airport at the former master jet base. As members of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, we applaud and support the City of Los Angeles's efforts and encourage your support of the proposal.

Our districts, which represent in excess of 1,200,000 constituents and include the cities of Santa Ana, Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, Costa Mesa, Garden Grove, Westminster, Los Alamitos, Seal Beach, Fountain Valley, Cypress, La Palma & Stanton are not supportive of the City of Irvine and the current efforts to build yet another so-called "park" for south Orange County. In fact, much has been misrepresented about "the will of the people" and *Measure W*. The City of Irvine has no intention of implementing the *Great Park* initiative that was passed by a small minority of Orange County voters last March. Irvine and the Department of Navy quickly joined forces to expedite the annexation of El Toro in order to facilitate an auction of the property and circumvent *Measure W*. This so-called *Great Park* has suddenly turned into the *Great Development*, complete with plans for several thousand expensive homes, as well as massive commercial and industrial developments.

Quality of life for our constituents means jobs. An airport at El Toro will act as a tremendous economic catalyst and generate jobs in southern California, as well as mitigate our over-dependence on Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) in servicing Orange County's aviation demands.

As you are well aware, the southern California region even in the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 tragedy is in dire need for additional runway capacity to accommodate the region's ever burgeoning air passenger and cargo demand. Orange County, due to its

affluence and economic base is a major contributor to our capacity crisis. We must not shirk our responsibilities and over-burden the southern California region. According to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), without an airport at El Toro, the region will fail to accommodate over 50 million annual passengers by 2025.

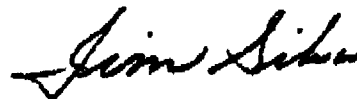
Some of our colleagues will continue to actively argue that Los Angeles should mind its own business and stop attempting to dictate an Orange County land use decision. We would argue that by allowing this existing aviation facility to be destroyed, they are passively placing an undue burden on the citizens of Los Angeles and the region as a whole. Some of our colleagues will continue to argue that we don't need additional capacity and that Orange County accommodates its own air passenger and cargo demand by utilizing John Wayne Airport (SNA). You are keenly aware of the limitations of SNA, as well as the facts concerning the projected demand and lack of capacity in the southern California region, even post-9/11. El Toro represents 36,000 feet of existing runways within a catchment area of 4 million people within 20 minutes away. Conversely, SNA is constrained both legally and physically with one 5,700-foot runway.

Mr. Secretary, there is a need for federal intervention and Mayor Hahn's proposal is the responsible alternative for all of the citizens of our region. Quality of life in southern California means jobs, access to affordable housing and an intelligent transportation system. We urge the federal government to embrace Mayor Hahn's proposal and resolve to make El Toro a true regional asset for the benefit of all of southern California for now and our future generations.

Sincerely,



Charles V. Smith  
Supervisor, First District



James W. Silva, Vice Chair  
Supervisor, Second District