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June 26, 2018

Richard V. Spencer
Secretary, United States Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Spencer:

I am deeply troubled by the recent news stories suggesting that the United States Navy has put together a proposal to create tent camps for undocumented immigrants on Department of Defense-owned land, including at Concord Naval Weapons Station (CNWS) in Concord, California. The Administration should abandon this proposal.

First and foremost, as the former Mayor of Concord and longtime Concord resident, I know that this proposal is antithetical to the values of our community. We are firm believers that every person regardless of immigration status has the same basic human rights, and rounding people up and forcing them to sleep in tent cities among tens of thousands of others is inhumane and cruel at the most basic levels.

The proposed site for this tent city is hugely problematic and is currently both unsafe and inhabitable. CNWS is adjacent to an Army ammunition and explosives depot, which has blast zones and other hazards. Portions of CNWS itself have been deemed not suitable to be transferred from the Navy to the City at this time because of their environmental hazards. Environmental cleanup has been underway by the Navy since 1983 on 1,200 acres of land and is still not completed. There is no current sewer, power, or water infrastructure on the land to allow for any human habitation. Forcing anybody to live on this land right now is more than dangerous – it is immoral.

We need only to look just south of CNWS to find why rushing to put people on this land is problematic. As I am sure you are deeply aware, land that was deemed as free of radioactivity and “safe for the city to occupy” is now under question at the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, also an EPA Superfund site.¹ Concerns over the regional implications for this radioactive soil have only just begun to be explored by the Navy and localities. This is no time to be rushing to have anyone occupy lands the Navy is responsible for cleaning up.

The proposal is also disingenuous. The City of Concord, along with local partners, has been in the process of acquiring this land from the Navy for 12 years. The first transfer of a portion of this land is set to take place in the coming months. The City and developers have spent tens of millions of dollars in

¹ <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Hunters-Point-shipyard-soil-scandal-widens-with-12963202.php>

good faith that the transfer of the land was imminent. If the Navy's plan is to either delay or cancel that transfer, there could be legal ramifications.

As a general policy, shipping undocumented immigrants to temporarily reside on federal land runs counter to what we learned with the success of the Family Case Management Program (FCMP). According to ICE, overall program compliance was an average of 99 percent for ICE check-ins and appointments, and 100 percent attendance at court hearings.² Abandoning the successes that FCMP brought in favor of a system that requires more spending, more physical and emotional harm to individuals, and that will yield the same results is irresponsible at best.

Given the preponderance of reasons why creating tent cities not only at Concord Naval Weapons Station, but also any other site in the country, is an unsafe and irresponsible blueprint, I ask that you immediately abandon this proposal and return to a more compassionate model that treats those fleeing unspeakable violence and unsafe conditions with the respect they deserve.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

² <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2017-12/OIG-18-22-Nov17.pdf>