



BRAC Commission

AUG 04 2005

Received

August 1, 2005

Chairman Anthony J. Principi and Members of the
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi and Members of the Commission:

The Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau is responsible for the promotion of travel and tourism to Monterey County, and for servicing our visitors during their stay. A non-profit organization, we are funded in part by community members and in part by our cities and county government.

We would like to address the Commission regarding its proposed consolidation of base operations at the Naval Postgraduate School and the Presidio of Monterey/Defense Languages Institute. We understand that, among other proposals, you may be considering closure or consolidation of these two establishments of higher education.

From the community's point of view, closure of either – while not perhaps on the disastrous scale of the closure of Fort Ord in 1994, which blighted the neighboring communities of Marina, Seaside, Salinas and others – would be a significant loss to the vitality of Monterey. Other groups or individuals may speak to the direct economic loss to their communities; we would like to address how it affects travel, tourism and hospitality.

Students attending the unique Defense Languages Institute (DLI) and Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), or serving at the Presidio of Monterey, are living and working in two of Monterey's most historic places, integral to the fabric of our community. Monterey itself was founded as a military outpost by the Spanish in 1776 at the foot of the present-day Presidio, making it even older than the Presidio in San Francisco. The NPS is housed in the historic Del Monte Hotel (recently approved for extensive refurbishment).

The spouses of those students and service people become active in our communities, contributing many volunteer hours to Monterey County's 300+ events and non-profit organizations, such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the Monterey History & Art Association, and the Monterey Jazz Festival. Without their assistance, these events and organizations would find it difficult to continue serving their communities.

monterey county convention & visitors bureau

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And of course, in economic terms, the family and friends who come to visit service people during their term in Monterey stay in our hotels, dine in our restaurants, enjoy our attractions, and reconnect with their loved ones on Monterey's tranquil coastline. It is not unusual for them to return again, either for another visit or to enroll in one of Monterey County's other institutions of higher education.

On a county-wide level, we would support the possible relocation of the Camp Parks Reserve Forces Training unit to Fort Hunter Liggett, and would do everything in our power to help service people assigned there feel welcome in Monterey County.

We encourage the Commission to carefully review all the materials our community may send you regarding the possible closure or realignment of The Presidio, the Naval Postgraduate School, or Fort Hunter-Liggett. Their value to us is inestimable, and their loss would be felt throughout our community. If there is any further information the MCCVB can provide, please do not hesitate to call me.

Best wishes,



Michael Zimmerman
Chair
MCCVB

Cc: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, California
The Honorable Sam Farr, 17th Congressional District
Leon Panetta, California's Council on Base Support & Retention, Co-Chair
Mayor Dan Albert, City of Monterey
Fred Meurer, City of Monterey City Manager
Michael Houlemard, Executive Director, FORA
John McMahon, President, MCCVB