

Dear West Los Angeles Community Leaders,

I wanted to make you aware of action taken by Senator Dianne Feinstein last week in the Senate appropriations subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs regarding the West Los Angeles VA property. Senator Feinstein inserted language into the FY 2007 Military Construction and Veteran Affairs bill directing that **no commercial development should occur on the West Los Angeles Veterans Campus without the approval of Senate and House appropriators.** The language directs the VA to provide the Senate and House Appropriations Committees with a report on the Master Plan for the West Los Angeles Veteran Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) and its lands.

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) is the Chairman of the Military Construction and Veteran Affairs Subcommittee, and Senator Feinstein is the Subcommittee's Ranking Member. Feinstein worked in conjunction with Representative Waxman and Los Angeles Supervisor Zev Yaroslvsy on this bill, which was passed in the Subcommittee and goes to the full Senate in the coming weeks.

The following link should take you to the bill and report. If not, the bill is H.R. 5385 and the report is Senate Report 109-286.

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109_cong_bills&docid=f:h5385rs.txt.pdf

Thank you again for your commitment on this issue and I will keep you posted as it develops.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, July 24, 2006

<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

Senate Committee Requires Congressional Approval Before Commercial Development on West LA Veterans Affairs Campus

Washington, DC B The Senate Appropriations Committee has sent a strong message to the Veterans Administration (VA), directing that no commercial development should occur on the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Campus without the approval of Senate and House Appropriators, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) announced today.

“This 387-acre property has a unique national status that is the result of significant protections that were put in place to ensure the land is used to directly benefit veterans,” Senator Feinstein said. **“I believe it is crucial that the VA develop a master plan for the site and that no portion of the plan that does not relate exclusively to direct veterans services be permitted without Congressional approval.”**

The FY 2007 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill that was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on Thursday directs the VA to provide the Senate and House Appropriations Committees a report on the Master Plan for the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) and its land.

The bill also precludes the VA from moving forward on any recommendation included in the master plan that is not a direct veterans service without approval from the Committees on Appropriations. This includes not allowing enhanced use lease agreements for VA property or the selling of VA land without their approval.

The full Senate is expected to consider the bill in the coming weeks. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) is the Chairman of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee, and Senator Feinstein is the Subcommittee's Ranking Member.

"I applaud Senator Feinstein for taking this step to protect the West LA VA. We can never fully repay our veterans for their service and sacrifice, but we can assure them that this land will continue to be theirs," said Representative Henry Waxman (D-LA), who represents the area.

"I want to thank Senator Feinstein for ensuring that the long promised master plan for the West Los Angeles VA will be done prior to any further long term development of the property. The Senator recognizes that these are hallowed lands, and our community owes her a debt of gratitude," said Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, who also represents the area.

"For nearly 120 years, individuals and government representatives have consistently reaffirmed their commitment to safeguard this property and ensure its use for veterans," Senator Feinstein said.

"The local community has demonstrated a unified commitment to support our veterans. I have received over 600 letters, in addition to phone calls and emails, clearly stating that the VA property must be retained for VA uses. Furthermore, businesses and community organizations, including the Brentwood Community Council, Pacific Palisades Community Council, Bel Air/Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council, the Brentwood Community Federation, and the West LA Chamber of Commerce have all contacted my office to express their opposition to any commercial development plan. This is a critical issue to the community and it is imperative that their voices are heard."

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