



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

January 4, 2005

The Honorable Shawn Nelson  
Mayor of Fullerton  
Fullerton, CA 92832

Dear Mayor Nelson:

This letter responds to former Mayor Mike Clesceri's letter, dated December 7, 2004, regarding reuse of the former Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS), El Toro. Mayor Clesceri requested that the Department of Transportation (DOT) intervene in the Department of Navy's base closure process and propose development of the property as a civilian airport. He also asked DOT to seek special legislation that would convey ownership of the property to DOT for ultimate transfer to a local airport operating authority.

The Navy is responsible for the disposition of its bases, in accordance with the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Act of 1990. In the case of El Toro, the Navy's process conformed to those requirements and took into account local views on the question of use of the base as a civilian airport. As you know, the voters of Orange County passed Measure W that favored non-aviation use of the El Toro air station. There is no procedure available to DOT to request the Navy to revise that process and to withdraw its record of decision to dispose of the base for a non-aviation use, and DOT does not intend to pursue legislation seeking to convey El Toro to DOT for purposes of developing a civilian airport.

While there is no appropriate mechanism for DOT to revisit the Navy's decision to dispose of El Toro, data presented in a June 2004 DOT airport study supports the concern for development of adequate aviation capacity in the region. We will continue to work with you and representatives of other local communities for solutions to ensure sufficient capacity is available to meet the region's aviation needs.

I look forward to continuing work with the communities in southern California on this matter. If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Norman Y. Mineta', is written over a large, stylized 'X' mark.

Norman Y. Mineta