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**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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October 8, 2010

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Northwest
ATTN: Mrs. Kimberly Kler - NWTRC EIS
1101 Tautog Circle, Suite 203
Silverdale, WA 98315-1101

RE: Letter of Opposition to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) with particular reference to the Northwest Training Range Complex (NWTRC)

Dear Mrs. Kler:

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors is on record, as stated in our letter of April 7, 2009, as being fully supportive of "the need for the Navy to properly train to maintain a high state of proficiency and readiness to safeguard our nation and our naval personnel. However, we are confident that the training mission of the Navy can be accomplished in a way that is compliant with environmental principles and relevant environmental laws. We urge the Navy to adopt mitigations that will be protective of the marine environment and that will limit the potential adverse environmental impacts to marine mammals and fish species from the Navy's proposed alternative No. 2 for the NWTRC."

We write now to express our strong disappointment and opposition to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (OEIS) which fail to adequately respond to the reasonable requests for mitigation submitted by this Board and others. We particularly note, and incorporate by reference in their entirety the above referenced April 7, 2009 letter of opposition to the Preferred Alternative No. 2 for the Northwest Training Range Complex (NWTRC) and the letter of March 10, 2009 RE: Draft EIS/OEIS for the NWTRC as submitted by the Natural Resources Defense Council.

We are strongly disappointed that with one exception, the consistency determination from the California Coastal Commission, the FEIS/OEIS is non-responsive to the significant body of fact and science based evidence that supports the clear need for greatly enhanced mitigations to protect marine mammals, fisheries and the numerous other public trust values needlessly placed at risk by Preferred Alternative No. 2. We note for the record that many of the concerns pertinent to the preferred alternative apply equally to Alternative No. 1. For that reason, we urge that the FEIS/OEIS be withdrawn. We urge the Navy to re-think and revise the FEIS/OEIS to incorporate appropriate mitigations that are legally compliant and environmentally protective, at which time the revised FEIS/OEIS can be re-circulated for comment.

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We note with particular disappointment the lack of meaningful mitigations for fish and fisheries. As stated in our letter of April 7: "Fisheries resources in California have declined precipitously in recent years due to a variety of causes. The presence of a viable fishing industry helps define the rural character of Mendocino County and contributes directly and indirectly to our local economy, including providing a significant cultural and epicurean backdrop for the local tourist industry. Anything that negatively impacts the fishing industry also negatively impacts our local tourist industry, economy and character. We are concerned that there seems to have been no meaningful effort to identify essential fisheries habitat for commercial fish species or to quantify in any meaningful way the potential impacts. The EIS acknowledges that there will be mortality and injury associated with training activities but without providing any meaningful analysis peremptorily concludes that there will be no significant impacts." This cavalier approach to one of our premier public trust values is simply unacceptable.

We are not mollified by statements that California waters will only be used for transit of ships and submarines with very limited training while en route. What is the nature of that "limited training"? Will it involve sonar, aerial bombardment or undersea detonations? We wish to make it clear that none of these activities are appropriate as we try to recover our fisheries resource that has been decimated by past short sighted practices. We are concerned also that these activities may place at risk our commercial and recreational fishermen and women.

We are equally concerned with the lack of meaningful mitigations for marine mammals. It is our understanding that under ideal conditions of calm seas and daylight hours only 5% of marine mammals can be detected, which renders the visual detection protocols of the FEIS/OEIS ineffective. The surest way to avoid impacts to marine mammals is to avoid feeding grounds, calving grounds and migration routes at times when marine mammals are known to be present.

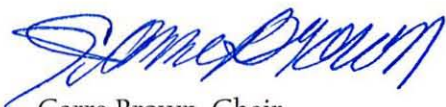
Further, the California Fish and Game Commission, pursuant to the State of California Marine Life Protection Act, is expected to adopt Marine Protected Areas in an effort to protect marine life, habitat, and ecosystems and assist in the recovery of our fisheries. We are concerned that these efforts may be negatively impacted by the NWTRC.

We particularly urge the adoption of all mitigation measures cited by the above referenced NRDC letter of March 10, 2009 and additionally call for the siting of all training exercises in California a minimum of fifty (50) miles from shoreline or beyond the continental shelf, whichever is greater and a minimum of fifty (50) miles from the boundaries of any Marine Protected Areas.

We are given to understand that the Navy has agreed to keep all training in California at least 12 miles from shore, and "most" training fifty miles from shore, but are not aware of written documentation that would support this protocol or quantify "most." Without such documentation and quantification, this pledge is rendered meaningless.

In closing, we reiterate that the FEIS/OEIS fails to provide meaningful mitigations for numerous public trust values, including protection of fish, fisheries, and marine mammals. Accordingly, we strongly urge that the FEIS/OEIS be withdrawn, revised to adopt appropriate mitigations and re-circulated for comment.

Sincerely,



Carre Brown, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

cc: Congressman Mike Thompson
United States Senator Barbara Boxer
United States Senator Dianne Feinstein