

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 6, 2003

The Honorable Anthony Principi
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Principi:

We write to express our strong opposition to Network 22's formation of the Desert Pacific Healthcare Network Land Use Planning Committee to determine the reuse of "excess land" at the West Los Angeles Health Care Center (WLAHC). The proposal for the committee has been drafted in conjunction with the Network's Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Market Plan. For your convenience, we have enclosed a copy of it, and our April 10, 2003 letter to you, which details our concern for proper land use planning at the WLAHC.

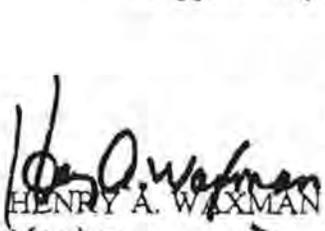
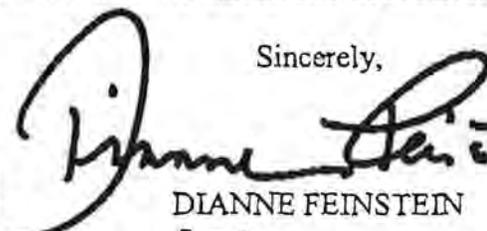
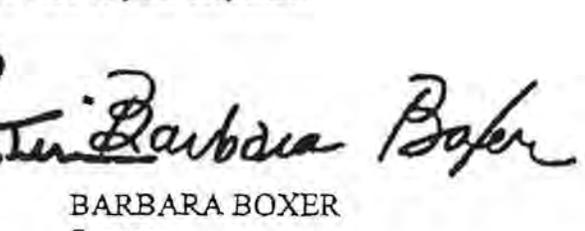
As you know, Section 707 of the Veterans Programs Enhancement Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-368) requires the development of a land use master plan for the WLAHC. After the VA rejected the controversial April 2001 "Plan for the Development of a 25-Year General Use Plan," we greatly appreciated your public commitment to initiate a new master land use plan once the CARES process is concluded (letter enclosed).

VISN 22's proposal for a Desert Pacific Healthcare Network Land Use Planning Committee would allow decisions on the use of "excess land" to be made on a project-by-project basis without a comprehensive land use plan in place. In addition, the committee would be exempt from the Federal Advisory Compliance Act (FACA) requirements for a representation of balanced viewpoints and public meetings with advance notice. We strongly oppose this proposal.

This is a critical matter to our community and our veterans. We request your intervention to ensure that VISN 22 does not proceed with the Desert Pacific Healthcare Network Land Use Planning Committee. Moreover, it is important that we adhere to your timetable to develop a comprehensive land use plan upon the completion of CARES.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

		
HENRY A. WAXMAN Member U.S. House of Representatives	DIANNE FEINSTEIN Senator U.S. Senate	BARBARA BOXER Senator U.S. Senate