



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON

March 31, 2008

The Honorable Henry Waxman
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Waxman:

This is in response to your letter regarding the Fox Entertainment Group Sharing Agreement on the West Los Angeles campus of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System.

The sharing agreement with Fox Studios and the environmental assessment of the building site have been suspended until a decision can be made on whether it would be in the Government's best interest to continue with the project. A newly formed Network Land Use Committee (which includes external stakeholders) will conduct a review and make a recommendation to Network leadership regarding the project.

The Federal Government has exclusive jurisdiction over Federal enclaves such as VA property in West Los Angeles. Therefore, VA is not subject to local construction and zoning requirements such as Los Angeles County's requirements for construction permits. After hearing concerns expressed by the community, VA voluntarily decided to halt construction on the Fox sharing agreement project on February 1, 2007. VA determined at that time that an environmental assessment (EA) should be conducted. However, an EA will not be conducted until a decision is made by the Network Land Use Committee whether to proceed.

The industrial yard mentioned in your letter has no record of contamination. As part of the contract with Fox, they were to remove an underground waste oil tank and then purchase a new above ground tank. The underground tank was removed, but the project was suspended before an above ground tank was purchased. The contractor responsible for removing the underground tank found no contamination and filed the appropriate closure report after the work was completed. The contractor received a permit from the Los Angeles City Fire Department prior to removing the tank.

Thank you for your continued support to our Nation's veterans.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James B. Peake".

James B. Peake, M.D.