February 28, 2024

Attn: Andrew Powers, City of Thousand Oaks

RE: RDP BUDGET REQUEST FOR 24/25

The Regional Defense Partnership (RDP) thanks your city for its continuing participation, and requests that you designate $25,087.16 for RDP in your FY 24/25 budget. An explanation for the increase in dues follows.

RDP dues have not increased in the two decades since we formed. However, our Board recently considered the organization's expenses and income, and determined that an increase in dues is necessary. The expenses include a DC lobbyist, a retired Admiral in San Diego to liaison with Navy Southwest, a part-time Executive Director, a part-time administrative assistant, and a retired Navy "specialist" who writes white papers for the offices we visit during our annual DC lobbying trip. Additionally, we pay for a small office, storage space and memberships in state and national organizations so we can keep track of what is going on, militarily. All of these costs have increased since 1996, when we formed.

What past BRACs (Base Realignment and Closures) taught us was that we needed to relocate tenant activities to Naval Base Ventura County (NVBC) from whatever base they are slated to leave, in order to diversify the range of activity at NVBC, and we have done that! We lobbied many years to bring 30 additional tenant commands here, including an E-2 squadron and school, the Coast Guard's helicopter unit from LAX, the Navy's only Directed Energy Test Facility, and the Unmanned Systems Complex (air, surface and subsurface). We also lobbied for and got eight C-130J aircraft and a better fire-fighting system for the Air National Guard, as well as a training simulator, and that doesn't count more than $180 million in military construction projects.

Our efforts have brought more than $80 million in new work per year to the installation, which is Ventura County's largest employer. The Navy, alone and not counting the Air Guard or the Coast Guard, employs 24,000 civilians and 4,091 active-duty, with a payroll of $4,6 billion. Loss of NBVC would be extremely detrimental to our economy.

While we are proud of our efforts, we can't sit on our laurels or ease up one bit. Old programs go and we must continue to lure new programs and programs that exist elsewhere which would be a good fit if relocated to NBVC, all in our attempt to "BRAC-proof" the base. When Congress votes again to cut the military budget by closing bases, we still must be prepared to fight as we have done in the three previous BRAC rounds. We do have a reserve to start an anti-BRAC campaign, but it is only a small fraction of what the total cost would be.

We regret the large increase in dues for the coming year; to prevent that from happening again, our Board voted at its last meeting to annually increase dues by the cost of living, unless something extraordinary happens. The percentage formula used to derive dues is the same one

developed by the City Managers and County CEO when we were first formed: each city's share is determined by the percentage of civilian employees whose W-2 forms are sent to its ZIP codes, with the County paying the cost of the DC lobbyist. Periodically we ask our Congress person to obtain current ZIP data for us, but the proportion of civilian employees who live in each jurisdiction remains surprisingly stable. We have also tried and tried to get similar ZIP data for employees of contractors, but that information is just not available.

The RDP Board is made up of two members of the Board of Supervisors, a Council member from each dues-paying city and 6 members of the public, consisting of retired civilians and military leaders of NBVC, a representative from Cal State Channel Islands, and a former Camarillo City Councilmember/long-time RDP Treasurer.

We look forward to continuing to work with your city to retain and increase the military presence in Ventura County, as well as the economic benefits we derive from it.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Craven

Charlotte Craven,
RDP Treasurer