



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DISTRICT 4
File #: 22-193

Board Meeting Date: 3/22/2022

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor Warren Slocum, District 4
Subject: Letter of Support for the Construction of a Veterans Home at Fort Ord

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing and directing the President of the Board of Supervisors to sign and transmit to appropriate Federal and California State legislators a letter in support of Monterey County's efforts to secure authorizing legislation for the construction and operation of a State Veterans Home at Fort Ord, California to serve elderly and disabled California veterans.

BACKGROUND:

State Veterans Homes (SVHs) are facilities that provide nursing home, domiciliary or adult day care for eligible veterans of the Armed Forces. They are owned, operated, and managed by state governments and the federal government has no role in their management. These facilities date back to the post-Civil War era when many states created them to provide shelter to homeless and disabled Veterans of the Civil War. SVHs were originally built and paid for only with state funds but Congress has long provided assistance to States in building and operating such facilities.

During the 2019 fiscal year, the United States Veterans Administration made approximately \$502 million in grants to the States for construction of SVHs.

There are currently eight SVHs in California, including facilities in Barstow, Chula Vista, Fresno, Lancaster, Redding, Ventura, West Los Angeles, and Yountville. Given the location of these SVHs, there is relatively little SVH capacity in the Bay Area.

DISCUSSION:

There is a significant need for additional SVH capacity in California, especially in our region of the State and the County of Monterey is seeking authorizing legislation for the construction of a SVH at Fort Ord, in Monterey County.

This resolution would support Monterey County's efforts by authorizing and directing the President of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors to sign and transmit to our State legislators the letter accompanying this report, calling on the State Legislature to authorize and fund the construction, and operation of a new State Veterans Home at Fort Ord, in the Marina/Monterey County region.

The construction of a new Veteran's Home in Monterey County would help alleviate the long wait times that many California veterans face in securing space at a SVH and would provide California Veterans with more opportunity to remain in this region, closer to their families, support systems and hometowns. Current wait times for admittance to existing SVHs in the State are long, and include the following:

- Yountville: 5 years
- West Los Angeles: 2 years
- Fresno: 4 years
- Redding: 5 years

The new Veterans Home could open up additional options for the as many as 108,000 veterans in a region that includes Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, San Benito, Santa Clara, and San Mateo Counties. Veterans Homes provide skilled nursing and memory care services for aging, disabled, and homeless veterans. Also, Fort Ord and Monterey County provide access for the residents to the Major General William H. Gourley VA-DoD Outpatient Clinic, Commissaries, Post exchanges and other veteran accessible facilities.

Many veterans who are unable to access services such as those offered by SVHs may find other options that result in them leaving the region or the State, with all of the negative social and economic impacts that flow from such displacement. It is also the right thing to do to ensure that those who have served in the Nation's Armed Forces have these SVH services available.

At its March 14 meeting, the San Mateo County Veterans Commission unanimously voted to recommend this resolution to the Board of Supervisors. Upon approval of the resolution accompanying this report, the Board President will sign the accompanying letter, which will be transmitted to the appropriate federal and state elected officials to set forth the Board of Supervisors' support for Monterey County's request for legislation allowing a Veteran's Home to be built in the region.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.