To: District 6 Regional Forester Jim Pena

Via: Forest Service email contacts page

Date: November 25, 2014

Cc: The Hons. Derek Kilmer, Maria Cantwell, Patty Murray, Rick Larsen,

Chief of Forest Service Tom Tidwell,

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack

Subject: Temporary Special Use Permit for the Navy

Dear Mr. Pena,

Sometime in 2011, District Ranger Dean Millett issued a temporary Special Use Permit to the Navy for testing its mobile emitter(s) on Forest Service lands in the Olympic National Forest. Despite repeated requests, a copy of this permit has never been provided to the public, and unfortunately, Mr. Millett’s actions and unresponsiveness have communicated a disregard for public opinion and a lack of respect for them as well. Though this may not be true from Mr Millett’s viewpoint, these impressions are nonetheless firmly lodged in widespread public perception.

Not one person from the Forest Service showed up at a recent and crowded public meeting in Pacific Beach, which was broadcast live, and this did not go unnoticed. Despite more than 2500 comments in little more than six weeks, almost all of them against this project, both Mr Millett and Mr Wahl indicated at one meeting, when there had been about 1800 comments received, that neither had seen anything “substantive” enough to dissuade them from approving the permit. This was taken as an insult and a challenge by many people.

In addition to making information such as the 2010 EIS extremely hard if not impossible to find, the Navy has also been dismissive of public concerns and at times condescending at public meetings. They have not been a friend to the Forest Service.

Is anyone listening? Are you aware of what is happening? Does the Forest Service leadership truly understand the depth of public passion for our National Forest lands and National Parks? To have upset almost the entire population of affected communities on the northern and western ends of the Olympic Peninsula and then to not be responsive to their concerns is utterly irresponsible. As a senior level and longtime public servant, you certainly know what a NEPA process should look like. This process may have checked some legal boxes, but it should be obvious that it has fulfilled neither the spirit nor intent of NEPA, which was, among other things, designed to allow the public to have a say in the management of lands and waters placed in the public trust.

Since no answers are being provided from the District level, my questions to you are:

1. When did you know about this temporary Special Use Permit?

2. What was the approval date?

3. What did the Forest Service do to make sure this use was compatible, and what research did it conduct to make sure there was no harm to birds, plants, trees, animals and human beings in the area of testing by the Navy?

4. Why has the Forest Service done no independent investigation to verify the Navy’s subsequent claims of no significant impacts? Are you aware, for example, that the way the Navy measures jet noise uses no actual jets, but instead a single engine placed on a test platform with its recorded sound levels averaged over a year with quiet periods?

5. Why was Mr Millett allowed to place only one public notice, in the Aberdeen Daily World, and not in papers that directly serve affected areas?

6. How can a Special Use Permit include allowing the use of Electronic Attack weaponry over National Forest airspace if these were not discussed in the Environmental Assessment?

7. Why has no investigation or research been done (or provided to the public) on any of the following?

a. Socioeconomic impacts to communities from increased jet noise and air pollution;

b. Impacts to wilderness values, including in Olympic National Park;

c. Cultural factors, including traditional uses of land;

d. Analysis of multiple stressors on humans, endangered species, and other wildlife;

e. Analysis of chronic radiation effects on humans, wildlife and habitats;

f. Evaluations of the protection of children, environmental justice, water, land use, and geology;

g. Analyses on population effects on threatened bird species, particularly the cumulative effects of noise and electromagnetic radiation on the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet, in whose critical habitat areas most of the Navy’s emitter sites will be located;

h. Analysis of the effects of electromagnetic radiation and loud sounds on migrating shorebirds, geese, ducks, and other non-listed birds;

i. Cost analysis for jet fuel savings from not flying an extra 400 miles, versus effects on the environment.

j. Analysis of other sites as alternatives to the Olympic MOA, including private lands.

k. Analysis of the increased fire danger posed by jet and drone crashes, sparks from vehicle transmitters or operators’ cigarettes, or misdirected electromagnetic beams from either the transmitters or from jets, hitting tinder-dry vegetation;

l. Analysis of the interaction and effects of climate change as a potential magnifier of impacts.

j. Analysis on how the interests of the permit applicant override the interests of the public.

k. Analysis of how, in the absence of proof from the Navy that alternate training sites do not exist, as stipulated in the 1988 Master Agreement, that the Forest Service can issue the permit.

I appreciate the difficult situation that some Forest Service employees have been placed in, but there is lawful basis for not issuing this Special Use Permit, and I urge you to instruct that it not be approved. I look forward to hearing from you about the issues raised above, and I thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Karen Sullivan