

United States Senate

October 17, 2014

The Honorable John M. McHugh
Secretary of the Army
U.S. Department of Defense
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Dear Secretary McHugh:

As the Army prepares for the 2020 Force Structure Realignment, I encourage you to examine how water conservation efforts have dramatically enhanced mission flexibility at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

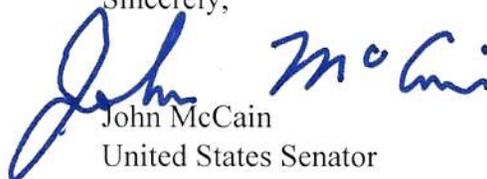
Over the past two decades, Fort Huachuca has proven itself as the U.S. Army's top installation working to conserve water supplies in the arid western United States. Earlier this year, Fort Huachuca achieved its goal of fully offsetting its own water consumption budget of 6,000 acre-feet of water per year (about 1.9 billion gallons of water used annually on and off post) *and* has exceeded that offset by another 1,300 acre-feet per year. Currently, the Fort is credited with supplying nearby aquifers with more water than it withdraws. In terms relating to the job cuts proposed under the Force Structure Realignment, Fort Huachuca has gone from being a no-growth installation because of limited water availability to a sustainable installation that could feasibly **double** the size of its current mission if called upon by the Army. This is a major environmental and military readiness achievement that should not go unnoticed in your review.

This success story came about because of Fort Huachuca's longstanding leadership role in the Upper San Pedro Partnership, a collection of federal, state and local governments, and key environmental organizations who are working to safeguard water levels in the San Pedro River, one of the last major free flowing rivers in the southwest United States. The San Pedro's riparian habitat is home to a variety of endangered species and other wildlife that's unique to Arizona's desert climate. Under to a recent Biological Opinion issued by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the direct and indirect water consumption by the Fort's 12,700 employees and their families have been successfully mitigated so as to not negatively impact the endangered species that depend on the San Pedro River.

Impressively, the Fort is aiming to go above and beyond what's already been accomplished. Its command is currently working with the nearby City of Sierra Vista, Arizona, and the state and county water authorities, and The Nature Conservancy to implement other large-scale water conservation and aquifer recharge projects that will continue to benefit the Fort, the San Pedro River, and the surrounding civilian community. I encourage you to consider this

water conservation effort as you evaluate proposed job cuts at Fort Huachuca under the Army's 2020 Force Structure Realignment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John McCain". The signature is stylized, with a large, looped "J" and "M".

John McCain
United States Senator