Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 17, 2012

The Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Dear Secretary Mabus,

Please allow us to convey the sincere gratitude of the entire Virginia congressional delegation to the Department of the Navy and Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana personnel for their rapid response, superb teamwork and sensitivity to the immediate needs of those impacted by the April 6th F/A-18D crash in Virginia Beach. There is no question that the seamless coordination between state, local, and military responders prevented additional casualties and property losses. We also want to salute the spontaneous efforts of local residents who quickly pulled the two naval aviators to safety and then assisted fire crews as they deployed firefighting equipment. This teamwork continued as officials from the Commonwealth of Virginia coordinated with Virginia Beach and Navy representatives to provide assistance to those residents who sustained damage or loss. This finely tuned coordination between civilian and military first responders and relief workers is truly commendable.

As the bipartisan elected congressional leadership of Virginia, we want to ensure to you that we view the Navy as an integral part of the fabric of our Virginia Beach and Hampton Roads communities. The men and women who serve in Hampton Roads are our neighbors, friends, and family. As Virginians, we are extremely proud of the important role played by NAS Oceana. Since 1943, NAS Oceana has trained many of our Nation's most elite pilots and leaders, reflecting the Navy's commitment to provide our warfighters with top-notch training.

We have worked as a delegation over many years to support this training and ongoing community partnership. In fact, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the City of Virginia Beach have worked hand-in-hand with the Navy to actively address and control encroachment issues at NAS Oceana. Since 2006, the city and state have proactively spent more than $115 million to remove structures from the Accident Prevention Zone located adjacent to NAS Oceana.

We look forward to continuing and strengthening this long and mutually beneficial partnership between the Commonwealth, the City of Virginia Beach and the naval aviation community.

Sincerely,

Jim Webb
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

Robert Wittman
Member of Congress

Scott Rigell
Member of Congress

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress

J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress

Robert Hurt
Member of Congress

Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress

Eric I. Cantor
Member of Congress

James P. Moran
Member of Congress

H. Morgan Griffith
Member of Congress

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress