

Politics & Government

Naval Weapons Station Eyed As Mass Detention Camp, Rumors Suggest

Elected officials react to national news reports that Concord Naval Weapons Station is being considered for an immigrant detention camp.

By [California News Wire Services](#), News Partner. | Jun 22, 2018 10:43 pm ET



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY, CA — East Bay leaders responded Friday afternoon to the Trump administration's purported plans to have the U.S. Navy place as many as 47,000 immigrants in a mass-detention camp at the Naval Weapons Station just outside Concord. The city of Concord issued a

statement on social media saying city officials were "very concerned" to learn of Friday's news, and that the Navy has not yet communicated its intentions to the city.

City officials are currently in negotiations to acquire the Naval Weapons Station but they do not have jurisdiction or control over the 12,800-acre property-which is listed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a "superfund site" due to the presence of hazardous materials such as arsenic, mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) in the soil and sediment.

There may even be unexploded ordnance, or bombs, in an area used as an on-site landfill, according to the EPA.

In a video posted to Facebook today, Rep. Mark DeSaulnier, D-Walnut Creek, called this a result of an administration that's out of control.

"My message to the administration, as someone who represents this facility, is to stop," DeSaulnier said. "Just stop. This is nothing short of madness."

As a former Contra Costa County supervisor, and former mayor of Concord, DeSaulnier argued that the Naval Weapons Station would not be an appropriate location for such a facility.

Current Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia, District 1, also weighed in on the matter on Twitter.

"That's crazy, we'll fight it and we won't let that happen!!!" Gioia said.

Margaret Hanlon Gradie, executive director of the Central Labor Council of Contra Costa County, also issued a statement late this afternoon in opposition to the mass-detention facility.

"We believe this land - the public's land, belonging to the people of Concord - should be used for schools, hospitals, affordable homes and good jobs, not the criminal abuse of human rights," Gradie said.

The comments by local leaders came in response to national news reports, first appearing on Time magazine's website at time.com, that the Navy is preparing plans to build facilities to detain tens of thousands of immigrants and asylum seekers on military bases in California, Alabama and Arizona as part of the White House's "zero-tolerance policy" for undocumented immigrants.

Navy public affairs did not immediately confirm the rumors about plans for a mass detention facility in the East Bay but Capt. Gregory Hicks, chief navy spokesman, did issue a statement.

"It would be inappropriate to discuss internal deliberative planning documents," Hicks said.

A duty officer for the navy's public affairs office referred further questions to public affairs personnel for the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

"The Department of Defense is conducting prudent planning and are looking at all available regions should (Department of Homeland Security) ask for assistance in housing adult illegal immigrants," Department of Defense spokesman Johnny Michael said in an email. "At this time there has been no request from DHS."