

*January 22, 2010*

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) yesterday met with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki to discuss issues affecting veterans in the Tri-Valley and Central Valley, including the future of the Livermore VA Medical Center and the status of the proposed medical facility for veterans in San Joaquin County.

“Secretary Shinseki and I were able to meet one-on-one to discuss improving services for veterans here at home and across our country,” said Rep. McNerney. “As a member of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, I’m committed to fighting for our men and women who wore our nation’s uniform. America’s veterans answered our country’s call to serve. Now it’s up to us to make sure they receive the care and benefits they earned.”

During their conversation, Congressman McNerney urged Secretary Shinseki to revisit decisions made by past VA Secretaries to close the Livermore VA. Congressman McNerney also invited Secretary Shinseki to personally visit the facility in Livermore and San Joaquin County.

“I shared with the Secretary the importance of veterans’ services being available at the Livermore VA and urged him to consider options that will keep the facility in veterans’ hands,” said Rep. McNerney. “There are thousands of veterans in the Tri-Valley and surrounding areas who utilize the services provided at the Livermore VA. Its closure would be a tremendous loss for the community.”

Congressman McNerney has long advocated for the possibility of using the Livermore VA as a site for expanded post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depression treatment, given the increased need for this type of treatment and the facility’s serene setting.

Congressman McNerney also spoke to the Secretary regarding the status of the proposed construction of a medical facility for veterans in San Joaquin County. Thanks in part to Congressman McNerney’s urging, the Department of Veterans Affairs reached a decision in May of last year that the facility would be located in San Joaquin County. A determination about the exact location for the new facility is underway.

“I urged the Secretary to expedite the selection of a site in San Joaquin County for the new medical facility for veterans,” said Rep. McNerney. “For years, San Joaquin County veterans have commuted hours, many by bus, to reach medical services. The sooner we provide those services right here in San Joaquin County, the sooner we will be able to better meet our commitment to care for our area’s veterans.”

Congressman McNerney, along with local elected officials, veterans’ groups and community leaders in San Joaquin County worked together over the past years to advocate for the

selection of San Joaquin County as the home of a new medical facility. During that process, Congressman McNerney met with current and past Secretaries of Veterans Affairs and won the support of the Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs for the San Joaquin County location.