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July 31, 2026

Brigadier General Andre M. Ingram, Commanding General
Marine Corps Installations East – Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune
1005 Michael Road
Camp Lejeune, NC 28542

Subject: Request for Marine Corps Support and Partnership in Meeting Future Wastewater Capacity and Resiliency Needs in Onslow County

Dear Commanding General Ingram:

On behalf of the Onslow Water and Sewer Authority (ONWASA), Onslow County, and the municipalities we collectively serve, we extend our sincere appreciation for the longstanding partnership among the United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, and our local governments. For more than two decades, this partnership has demonstrated how military and community leaders can work together to advance shared objectives, support regional growth, and improve the quality of life for the Marines, Sailors, civilian employees, and families who call Onslow County home.

We are writing to request the Marine Corps' support in addressing two closely related wastewater capacity and resiliency needs:

- 1. Support for pursuing approximately \$100 million in federal funding toward the planning, design, and construction of a new regional wastewater treatment facility located outside the installation that could serve both Camp Lejeune and the surrounding community; and**
- 2. Support for ONWASA and local Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune leadership to work together to restore all or a suitable portion of the 3.5-million-gallon-per-day treatment allocation previously approved for ONWASA in 2007.**
- 3. Support the idea of a second connection between ONWASA and the Base for shared wastewater treatment capacity through MARSOC/Stones Bay.**

These requests build upon a successful military-community partnership and would provide long-term benefits for Marine Corps readiness, infrastructure resiliency, military families, and the communities surrounding Camp Lejeune.

Our community is honored to support one of the nation's premier Marine Corps installations. Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River are critical to our national defense and serve as major economic drivers for Eastern North Carolina. The military presence in our region supports approximately 135,000 active-duty personnel, family members, retirees, and civilian employees and generates over \$4 billion annually in economic activity through payroll, contracts, and related expenditures.

More importantly, more than 70 percent of Marines and their families live outside the installation in communities served by ONWASA and our local governments. These military families rely each day on the same water, wastewater, transportation, public safety, educational, and recreational infrastructure as other Onslow County residents. As the military and surrounding communities continue to grow, sustained investment in regional infrastructure is necessary to support military readiness, quality of life, and responsible community development.

One of the most successful examples of this partnership is the wastewater treatment relationship between ONWASA and Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. Since the original Wastewater Sales Agreement was executed in 2004, the Marine Corps and ONWASA have worked together to maximize existing critical infrastructure, avoid the unnecessary duplication of facilities, and provide cost-effective wastewater treatment solutions that benefit both the installation and the surrounding community. Previous analyses associated with our Intergovernmental Support Agreement recognized that Camp Lejeune benefits from increased wastewater treatment efficiencies while the community avoids the substantial costs associated with constructing redundant treatment capacity.

Today, Onslow County continues to experience significant residential and commercial growth, particularly along the Highway 24 corridor, in the Swansboro area, and in other portions of the county that are home to substantial numbers of military families. ONWASA is making major investments in wastewater collection and transmission critical infrastructure to serve this growth responsibly. These investments, however, must be supported by adequate long-term treatment capacity and coordinated regional planning.

As part of our longstanding partnership, ONWASA was previously approved to use an additional 3.5 million gallons per day of wastewater treatment capacity under the existing agreement framework. That capacity was determined to be available, in the public's interest, and necessary to support the community's future needs. ONWASA respectfully requests the Marine Corps' support in working with local leadership at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune to restore this allocation and provide sufficient treatment capacity for the communities in which Marines and their families live.

Restoring the allocation would support the substantial wastewater collection and transmission systems investments already being made by ONWASA while continuing the mutually beneficial regional approach established through our existing agreements. It would also provide time for ONWASA, the Marine Corps, and our local government partners to develop a comprehensive long-term capacity and resiliency strategy.

In addition to restoring the previously approved allocation, we believe there is an opportunity for ONWASA and the Marine Corps to jointly pursue a regional wastewater treatment facility located outside the installation. ONWASA respectfully requests Marine Corps support in seeking approximately \$100 million in federal funding toward the planning, design, and construction of such a facility.

A new regional facility could provide several important benefits to the Marine Corps and the surrounding community. It could:

- Establish an additional treatment option and provide the Marine Corps with greater long-term operational flexibility;
- Reduce dependence on treatment capacity located entirely within the installation should future mission requirements require a change in how that capacity is used;
- Provide potential emergency or backup treatment capacity during major maintenance activities, system interruptions, natural disasters, or other unforeseen events;
- Strengthen regional infrastructure resiliency and redundancy;
- Support future military and civilian growth without unnecessarily duplicating public infrastructure; and
- Improve the reliability of wastewater services for Camp Lejeune and the military families who live throughout Onslow County.

We believe this approach aligns with the shared objectives of mission assurance, infrastructure resiliency, fiscal responsibility, operational flexibility, and community support. A coordinated federal, military, and local investment would allow us to develop a system that serves future generations of Marines and their families while strengthening the infrastructure upon which both Camp Lejeune and the surrounding community depend.

The third request is one that has also been discussed in the past and that is to consider the idea of a second connection between ONWASA and the Base for shared wastewater treatment capacity. This connection can also serve as enhancing resiliency for both the Base and ONWASA if we design the system to flow in both directions. The Southeast service area of ONWASA is rapidly growing and having additional options for wastewater treatment is critical in our ability to serve this area which includes homes for many of those that work on Base or support the quality of life for everyday operations around the base.

We respectfully request your support for continued collaboration among Headquarters Marine Corps, Marine Corps Installations East, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, ONWASA, Onslow County, and our municipalities. Specifically, we request assistance in identifying and pursuing appropriate federal funding opportunities for the proposed regional treatment facility and support for local discussions regarding restoration of ONWASA's previously approved 3.5-million-gallon-per-day wastewater treatment allocation or a suitable portion of that allocation as well as the idea of a second connection between ONWASA and the Base at MARSOC.

The partnership between our organizations has served as a model of military-community cooperation for more than twenty years, and the overall community collaboration between the county and our local Marines has flourished for decades. We look forward to building upon that success and working together to develop infrastructure solutions that strengthen military readiness, protect public investments, and support the Marines, Sailors, civilian employees, and families who make Onslow County their home.

Thank you for your leadership, your service to our nation, and your continued commitment to the Marines and families of Onslow County. We greatly appreciate the Marine Corps' enduring partnership and stand ready to work collaboratively toward solutions that benefit both the installation and our shared community.

Respectfully,

Michael R. Bennett, Chairman
Onslow Water and Sewer Authority

Tim Foster, Chairman
Onslow County Board of Commissioners

Sammy Phillips, Mayor
City of Jacksonville

McKinley D. Smith, Mayor
Town of Richlands

Pete Parnian, Mayor
Town of Holly Ridge

Richard Grant, Mayor
Town of North Topsail Beach

William Justice, Mayor
Town of Swansboro

cc:

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Town of Richlands Board of Aldermen
Town of Swansboro Board of Commissioners
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The Honorable Phil Shepard, North Carolina House of Representatives
The Honorable Carson Smith, North Carolina House of Representatives
The Honorable Michael A. Lazzara, North Carolina Senate
The Honorable Gregory F. Murphy, M.D., U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Thom Tillis, United States Senate
The Honorable Ted Budd, United States Senate