

INDIAN HEAD, MD – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) met today with community leaders and representatives of the local community group established to advocate on behalf of NSWC Indian Head Division, to discuss issues important to the community, including the Administration’s proposal to conduct two additional Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) rounds. Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:

“Indian Head Division is strong and growing. Since the Indian Head Division Alliance was started by John Bloom in the early 1990s, we have invested over \$200 million in new construction. If you have the opportunity to visit inside the gate, you’ll see a lot of construction activity – it is beginning to intensify.

“We had a dedication for an important \$10 million facility for Indian Head Division researchers just last month. Last summer, we welcomed 40 new workers, some of whom relocated from Yorktown, VA to Indian Head. They were part of what we gained in the BRAC of 2005. Those workers have 3 brand new buildings and 6 newly renovated buildings – part of two military construction appropriations of about \$18 million.

“This kind of success could not be accomplished without the great support of this community. That support begins with the Alliance and the Chamber of Commerce. Both organizations have been instrumental over the years.

“Your county government has also been extraordinarily supportive of this base and I commend the current and past boards for that support. The county’s financial support has been extraordinary and it has made a difference.

“Let me quickly also tout the role of the Energetics Technology Center – the ‘ETC’ – under the leadership of Bob Kavetsky and the College of Southern Maryland – Dr. Gottfried, your support has been crucial.

“This is a community that knows the value of its base and knows how to support its mission. I thank each of you for your continued commitment and support of the vital public/partnership that we have forged over the years – it has paid off.

“Recently, we built a new sewage treatment plant that helps to clean up the Potomac River and the Bay. Construction should begin within a month or two on another \$34 million project to replace a 70 year old building that is the Department of Defense’s only source for Otto Fuel.

“In fact, during the past few years, we have worked with you to invest a total of \$23 million for new construction projects that were congressional earmarks – put in the budget to strengthen Indian Head Division – and strongly supported by Senators Mikulski and Cardin.

“We also worked together to bring the U.S. Marines to Indian Head. In the aftermath of 9/11, we worked with Marine Corps Commandant James Jones to ensure this group found a permanent home at Indian Head, providing close proximity to the Nation’s Capital.

“If you get the chance, you should visit the Chemical Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF) unit. The marines have established themselves well at Indian Head and have grown into a very professional unit that adds greatly to the base. This CBIRF Unit, along with the Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC) presence, add to the core energetics mission of our base.

“Today, we must re-double our efforts to protect our Indian Head base and I commend you for your continuing efforts to do so. Whether a BRAC comes sooner or later is actually less relevant than the question, ‘Are we ready for BRAC?’

“As communities have become more sophisticated about how programs move into certain communities, the smart ones have come to recognize that much can shift outside of the BRAC process and that is why we need to remain vigilant each and every day to protect our mission and work to enhance it.

“To that end, we must continue to sell our base. On February 27th, I had lunch at the Pentagon

with Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus and we talked about Indian Head. I asked him to follow up with a visit so he could see firsthand the great work we are doing and understand our needs.

“On March 12th – 2 weeks later – he arrived at Indian Head for briefings and a tour. He left impressed with the depth and breadth of our capabilities and with a whole new appreciation for the relevance of work being done for today’s warfighter.

“Prior to that, we had Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta down to visit Pax River, and we had the chance to talk about the energetics mission at Indian Head and how crucial it is to our national security.

“On two separate occasions, I have also been to the Pentagon to meet with high level DoD officials, including the Deputy Secretary of Defense and those in DoD and the Navy responsible for BRAC – to discuss Indian Head and the importance of its mission.

“Continuing to work every day to sell our base is what I intend to do and I know you share in that commitment to continued success.”