Hon. Leland Ford,
Member of Congress,
Washington, D.C.

My dear Leland:

I am again taking occasion to call your attention to a matter which I believe will interest you and which will afford you an additional opportunity of rendering a real service not only to the people of Southern California but to the entire Western part of the United States as well.

I have just come from a Committee meeting of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, where we listened to a prominent Los Angeles man, who has just returned from the Hawaiian Islands. This man is closely connected with many of the business interests in Hawaii and during his recent trip to Hawaii, he had the opportunity of personally visiting most, if not all, of the new military and aviation defense works which have been constructed on the Islands, and to confer with most of the business and military men in Hawaii. Since Pearl Harbor, a tremendous amount of work has been done by the Military Authorities to build up the defenses of the Islands, and especially to prepare a large number of large airports on the Island of Oahu and others of the Hawaiian group. These airports are now complete and ready for airplanes. The Military Authorities believe that the Islands can be made impregnable provided a large air force is immediately sent to the Islands. The morale of the people is excellent. The defense of the Islands is in charge of Military and Naval men in whom the people of Hawaii have the utmost confidence. The problem now is to bring sufficient pressure to bear upon the Powers That Be in Washington that they will send to Hawaii at once military and air equipment in the amounts as requested by the military men now in charge of the defense of Hawaii, rather than to send this equipment to other far-flung portions of the world pursuant to pressure from England, etc., etc.

Corregidor has fallen. The only fortress that stands between the Japanese today and an invasion of the Pacific Coast is Hawaii. As long as Hawaii stands, the Japanese cannot invade California. If Hawaii falls, an invasion of California by the Japanese is not only possible, but probable, and having once lost Hawaii, we may never recover the Islands again. It is, therefore, of prime importance to everyone in California that no stone be left unturned for the immediate equipment of the Hawaiian Islands with the facilities necessary to make that Island impregnable. I understand that the men who are now in charge of the defense of Hawaii have communicated their desires to Washington and advised Washington of the air force that is required immediately in Hawaii. The problem is how to get Washington to act, and how to get Washington to think in terms of defending the Pacific Coast instead of concentrating too much on the defense of North Ireland, Madagascar, Burma, Iceland, etc. In the last few months, we have seen all of the great fortresses in the Pacific fall and
only Hawaii now remains in the Pacific. We must not be "too little and too late" in the case of Hawaii.

I understand that within the next few days, you representatives of the Pacific Coast will be asked to get together and take whatever steps are necessary to demand that proper provision be made immediately for the adequate defense of the Hawaiian Islands by giving to those Islands at once the military and air force equipment for which the men defending Hawaii have made requisition. I believe this will be a popular cause for you to espouse. I hope you can exercise a leadership in this cause as you did upon the occasion of rallying the Pacific Coast Congressmen to demand evacuation of the Japanese. The people brought up and reared in the Atlantic Coast are very apt to be negligent in their consideration of the defense necessities of the Pacific Coast—perhaps that is only natural. But we on the Pacific Coast know that we have an area here worthwhile defending. We know that if Hawaii falls, the Pacific Coast stands an excellent chance of being successfully invaded. I understand that the next sixty to ninety days are the critical period. Someone must start moving immediately in Washington. I would like to see you get the jump on the others and take the lead in the demand for furnishing Hawaii immediately all of the air force which the Commanders of Hawaii feel is necessary for the proper defense of the Islands. Probably demand should be made through the Military Affairs Committee of Congress. Probably that Committee could insist on knowing what the requests are for air force, as made by the Commanders of Honolulu, and having ascertained that information, then bring pressure to bear on the White House to see that the necessary implements of war are immediately dispatched.

I feel this is a vital and live issue, and I hope it is one that will appeal to you and that you will feel justified in aggressively demanding that the necessary thing be done before it is too late.

Cordially yours,

LME:CG

(Signed) LE ROY EDWARDS