
State Government Committee

SB 6779

Brief Description: Creating the military facilities task force.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, B. Sheldon, Oke, Swecker, Rasmussen, Shin, Gardner, Roach, Hale and Costa.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Military Facilities Task Force to provide recommendations to the Governor and the state Legislature regarding actions needed to avoid the closing of military bases in Washington.

Hearing Date: 2/28/02

Staff: Kimberly Berry (786-7291).

Background:

The federal National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2002 requires that a fifth round of military base closings begin in March 2005. There have been four rounds of military base closings since 1988 with 451 installations closed to date. There are seven major military bases located in Washington.

The Base Closure Process:

By February 2004 the Secretary of Defense (secretary) must determine the number and type of military facilities needed to support the force-structure plan required to meet the threats to national security over the next 20 years. The base closing process will proceed only if the secretary certifies that additional closures are warranted. If base closures are desired, the President will appoint a nine-member Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (commission) to convene in March 2005 to vote on the list of base closures provided by the secretary. The commission will submit a final list, of military bases to be closed or scaled back, to the President by September 2005. The President and Congress each have to accept or reject the list as is.

As in previous base closure rounds, military value continues to be the primary criteria used to select military facilities for closure. However, for the 2005 base closure round, Congress

has changed the definition of military value. The new definition emphasizes preserving military facilities as staging areas for homeland defense missions, as well as guaranteeing the present and future availability of sufficient air, ground, and sea training areas that are diverse in climate and terrain. Other criteria will be considered, such as the economic impact on existing communities in the vicinity of the military facility.

In a change from previous rounds, the privatization and economic redevelopment of a base selected for closure may only occur if the commission recommends privatization as a method of closure for that specific facility.

Privatization of Military Base Support Services:

Military base infrastructure costs are being reduced through Department of Defense programs that outsource and privatize base support services and activities. Examples include the military housing privatization initiative, and the privatization of the on-base portion of military utility systems.

In Washington there is no formal governmental structure to facilitate the combined efforts of the Governor, the Legislature, local governments, private industry and the U.S. military to avert the closure of military facilities located in the state.

Summary of Bill:

The Military Facilities Task Force is created to provide recommendations to the Governor and the state Legislature regarding actions needed to avoid the closing of military bases in Washington. The primary goal of the task force is to facilitate the privatization of base infrastructure. Task force recommendations may include:

- expenditures appropriate to ensure continued operation of military facilities within the state;
- changes to state laws, local ordinances, zoning requirements, or any other regulations that would encourage the continued operation of military facilities within the state; and
- actions to take at the federal level in support of military facilities within the state.

The task force membership consists of the following:

- Executive Committee of the Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs;
- representatives from affected local governments;
- two non-elected community leaders appointed by the Governor;
- military authorities from each military base who wish to participate; and
- the Governor, or his or her designee, who serves as chair.

Staff support is provided by the Governor.

The duties of the task force end when the consensus of the membership is to dissolve.

Rulemaking Authority: No express authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.