

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 2064

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, April 2, 2003

Title: An act relating to a military facilities task force.

Brief Description: Studying methods of avoiding military base closure.

Sponsors: Representatives Woods, Rockefeller, Bush, Lantz, Ahern, Hankins, Benson, Haigh, Sehlin, Morris, Bailey, Wood, Talcott, Ericksen, Edwards and Carrell.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 4/2/03 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Horn, Kastama and McCaslin.

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: The 2002 National Defense Authorization Act 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. These are: McChord Air Force Base; Fairchild Air Force Base; Whidbey Island Naval Air Station; Fort Lewis; Bangor Naval Shipyard; Bremerton Naval Shipyard; and Everett Naval Station.

By February 2004, the Secretary of Defense 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 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.

Summary of Bill: The Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs must conduct a study of Washington military facilities to determine and coordinate efforts needed to ensure the facilities retain their premier status with respect to their national defense missions.

The joint committee must make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature on actions needed to ensure the viability of military facilities.

As part of the study, the joint committee must invite participation and input from experts, and consult with representatives and nonelected community leaders of each county and city containing a major military facility, and the military authorities of each military base in the state.

The study must commence immediately after completion of the legislative session and continues until such time as the consensus of committee membership is to conclude.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill is vitally important for the economy of the whole state. Our seven major bases have escaped closure in the previous rounds but perhaps at the risk of becoming more vulnerable in this round of base closures. This bill will help us present our case to the federal commission by using the existing joint committee as the focal point for the documentation required.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Betti Sheldon; Representative Woods.