

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESJM 8039

As Reported by House Committee On:

State Government

Brief Description: Requesting relief for military installations in Washington State from the latest round of closures under the Base Realignment and Closure process.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Jacobsen, Kastama, Thibaudeau, Berkey, Fraser, Doumit, Prentice, Horn, Kohl-Welles, Kline, Fairley, Oke, Stevens, Hale, Zarelli, T. Sheldon, B. Sheldon, Schmidt, McAuliffe, Murray, Spanel, Rasmussen, Winsley, Benton, Regala, Sheahan, Eide, Deccio, McCaslin and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/26/04 [DP].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Petitions the President, Congress, and the Department of Defense to recognize the strategic importance of Washington's military bases and to not make them victims of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Shabro, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, McDermott, Nixon, Tom and Wallace.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act (Act) for Fiscal Year 2002. The Act called for an additional round of base realignment and closure (BRAC) to occur in 2005. The previous rounds occurred in 1988, 1991, 1993, and 1995. The Act requires Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to compile a list of bases to be closed or realigned and submit the list to a BRAC commission by May 2005. In selecting military installations for closure or realignment, the Department of Defense will give priority consideration to military value. The commission must assess the recommendations and

submit to the President a report containing the commission's findings and conclusions including a list of proposed base closures and realignments. The President has 15 days to either accept or reject the commission's entire list. If approved, the list is transmitted to Congress, which has 45 days to approve or reject the entire list.

Summary of Bill:

The Memorial acknowledges the strategic and economic importance of military installations in Washington State and petitions the President, Congress, and the Department of Defense to recognize the strategic importance of these bases and to not make them victims of the 2005 BRAC round.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: On May 16, 2005, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld will recommend a list of base closures throughout the United States to the President. Washington is geographically and strategically important in terms of global concerns. Most past wars have started in Asia. With the 21st Century comes uncertainty, but one known factor is that North Korea has dangerous weapons. There are 86,000 military personnel in our state providing jobs and economic stability.

Testimony Against: The Quaker community is opposed to the bill. It is a serious economic condition in our state that motivated this joint memorial and it is time for Washington state to end its dependency upon inflated cold war era military budgets and the military industry. It is a sad commentary of the times when one must beg and lobby federal officials to preserve an industry of death and destruction for the state's economic health. Federal funds should be requested to sustain Washington's economy through peaceful means.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Shin, prime sponsor.

(Opposed) Eve Rickert, Friends Committee on Washington Public Policy (Quakers).

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.