



AICUZ/Encroachment- Related Articles

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ARIZONA



F-35 environmental report released

May 21, 2010 11:11 PM

BY JOYCE LOBECK - SUN STAFF WRITER

The community has another opportunity to voice its support or concerns about plans to base some of the squadrons for the nation's newest fighter jet at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma with an open house next month.

The latest draft of various plans to base the Marine Corps' Joint Strike Fighter at the air station is now available for the public to review and comment. The environmental impact statement, a comprehensive survey on the jet's environmental impacts, outlines six possible plans for basing of the new aircraft on the West Coast.

The F-35B, with short take off and vertical landing capability, is being developed to replace the current Marine fleet of combat jets, including Yuma's AV-8B Harriers. Other versions of the F-35 are being developed for the Air Force and Navy.

If selected, the preferred plan in the EIS would place five operational F-35B squadrons and one operational, test and evaluation squadron at MCAS Yuma, with another six operational squadrons at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

Public comments will be accepted until July 6, after which the final EIS will be prepared for a decision by the secretary of the Navy expected to be made in December.

An open house in Yuma concerning the draft EIS will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. June 17 at Gila Vista Junior High School, 2245 S. Arizona Ave. Military officials will be on hand at different information displays to describe the environmental analysis process, purpose, need and proposed action, alternatives and impacts.

There will be no formal presentation, but members of the public are encouraged to attend to learn more about the F-35 and to voice their questions, concerns and comments.

"Please come out, whether you're for or against it," said Julie Engel, president and CEO of Greater Yuma Economic Development Corp. "We want to hear from people ... their support and their concerns."

Those who can't attend the open house can submit their comments to: Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest, 1220 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 93132, attention to the JSF West Coast EIS project manager.

Of they can fill out a digital comment form on the project's public website at www.usmcJSFwest.com. The draft EIS also can be downloaded from that website.

Engel said people are also invited to participate in the Facebook page at Yuma F-35. For more information and articles about the project, visit the GYED website at www.greateryuma.org.

A scoping meeting was held in Yuma last year to gather questions and comments from the community on the proposed basing options. That input helped Department of the Navy planners determine what needed to be addressed in the EIS.

Despite delays and budget overages within the F-35 program, the Marine Corps is marching forward to prepare to reach an initial operating capability of 29 planes by December 2012, according to a statement released by Headquarters Marine Corps on March 18.

Ten of those planes would make up the first operational squadron, Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 332, which could be based at MCAS Yuma once the secretary of the Navy decides on the final basing plans.

On April 2, the Marine Corps activated a new squadron to train future F-35 pilots and maintainers beginning this fall. Marine Fighter/Attack Training Squadron 501 stood up as part of the Joint Integrated Training Center at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, according to Headquarters Marine Corps.

The Air Force will receive the F-35A variant, which will provide conventional takeoff and landing capabilities. The Navy will receive the F-35C, designed for carrier launches and duty at sea.

However, the production and basing of Navy and Air Force planes is separate and doesn't affect the F-35B, say Marine Corps officials.

CALIFORNIA



Mysterious jet noise is a cloudy issue

Loud noise confuses residents earlier this month; experts say we may never know what it was

By Jim Holt
Signal Senior Staff Writer
May 23, 2010

It's a bird. It's a plane.

No, wait.

That ear-splitting sound heard a couple of weeks ago could have been any of several possible aircraft.

Aviation experts are looking into at least one formal complaint of a noisy aircraft heard screaming through the Santa Clarita Valley on May 4. And they said any one of several agencies could be responsible for the noisy jet.

“We may never know precisely what aircraft it was at that time that caused that sound,” said Air Force Lt. Col. George Covin, one of two military representatives watching the skies and acting as regional liaison for the Federal Aviation Administration. It could be (the U.S.) Navy. It could be (the U.S.) Marines.”

At about 8:30 p.m. that day, some Santa Clarita residents heard what may have been a low-flying aircraft. One of those residents filed a formal complaint with officials at Edwards Air Force Base.

Dennis G. Shoffner, civil outreach director for the base, is the man who handles such complaints.

“I’m the guy who gets all the complaints, and I’m also the guy who gets all the requests to fly over this area, so I get it from both sides,” he said Friday.

“Here’s the deal,” he said. “Allegedly, on the fourth of May, a jet aircraft was flying doughnuts around Santa Clarita at about 8:30 p.m. and ... was flying lower than usual.

“We did have a Jester 02 that left restricted Air Force space at 8:39 p.m.,” Shoffner said, referring to a jet logged in with Edwards Air Force Base slated to conduct a return test flight to the West Coast.

Despite the jet being referred to as “Jester,” it performed no illegal, tricky or reckless aerial maneuvers such as flying in circle patterns commonly called “doughnuts,” Shoffner said.

“It flew according to flight instruction rules according to the FAA, traveling at 10,500 feet to Point Mugu and made a return flight at 9,500 feet by reverse routing,” he said, pointing out that the jet returned along its initial route.

“We can only speak for our aircraft,” he said, adding it is not absolutely certain that Jester 02 is the aircraft that prompted the complaint.

“It could be Navy or the Marine Corps,” he said. “I cannot sit here and say, ‘This is the aircraft those people saw.’”

Shoffner received no report or complaint about a second aircraft that night, as some of the noise observers claim.

Shoffner suggested contacting two flight monitoring agencies to see if any other aircraft — in addition to the Jester flight — were in the area at that time.

One of those agencies is the FAA Western District monitored by Lt. Col. Covin.

The other agency watching traffic in the skies over the Santa Clarita Valley is the FAA’s Flight Standards District Office in Van Nuys.

Messages left with the FAA office were not returned Friday.

Covin said Southern California is a busy area for military flight training. It could have been any one of a number of services that flew the noisy aircraft.

“It’s not enough to have the time and place,” he said. “We look at all the military aircraft in that area and try to determine what unit might have been involved.”

FLORIDA

The Florida Times-Union
jacksonville.com

Buoy Falls From Navy Plane Into Jacksonville Home

No injuries; the tracking device landed near a bed that was unoccupied.

Timothy J. Gibbons

May 22, 2010



A sonar buoy from a P-3 Orion on a routine training flight fell through the roof of a Mandarin house Friday morning, landing next to a bed that had recently been vacated.

The crew with Patrol Squadron 45 had just taken off from Jacksonville Naval Air Station when the 3-foot-long cylinder fell from the plane about 500 to 600 feet in the air.

No one was injured in the 9:15 a.m. incident. But it certainly startled Marwan Saman, who was sleeping about 50 feet away.

"I heard a very loud noise, like a bomb," said Saman, the owner of the Scott Mill Estates Drive home that was hit. "It shook the whole house."

Seconds earlier, passing motorist Mark Morrison just had pulled up to a stop sign when he noticed the plane.

"I heard it before I saw it," he said, his attention drawn through the open roof of his Corvette. "Then I saw something come out of it."

The buoy left the plane and "tipped downward," Morrison said.

"It looked like an arrow," he said. "It was surreal."

When it hit, it tore through the sheetrock and insulation in the roof and broke a wooden strut before landing next to the bed.

Saman's daughter had been sleeping there until about 8:45, he said.

Saman was shaken late Friday morning as he waited for Navy officials to show up and remove the device.

"I never thought that would happen," he said. "They fly every day here."

According to operations officers at Jacksonville NAS, this is the first time a buoy has been released like this in Jacksonville.

About 12:45 p.m. an explosives demolition team from Mayport Naval Station arrived to dispose of the buoy. Although it's not a weapon, it does contain an explosive charge that activates when dropped in the ocean.

The buoy is about 5 inches in diameter, weighing up to 40 pounds. The P-3 can carry dozens of the devices, which are dropped in the water to help track submarines.

The planes fly with the buoys loaded into launch tubes, while training or going out sub hunting. If one of the tubes does malfunction, the shaking and rattling as the old planes take off could lead to an accidental discharge.

Six members of an investigative team visited the site early Friday afternoon to begin looking into the incident, as did the commanding officer of the squadron, who assumed command last week.

Navy legal representatives are working with Saman on filing a claim with the Navy for repairs, which roofing company representatives at the house said Friday could be thousands of dollars.

The skies above Mandarin often are filled with surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft flying out of Jacksonville NAS.

Skies were empty of planes late Friday morning, leading to a quiet that neighbor Joette Anderson said was almost eerie.

The nearness of the planes has bothered her in the past, she said.

"It's never that quiet here," she said. "We hear them all the time. It scares me to death."

Look for the F-35C – but not too soon

Sunday, May 23, 2010

BY ADAM LINHARDT Citizen Staff

Naval Air Station Key West could be one of the first Navy bases to host the F-35C Lightning II – the Pentagon's exotic new Joint Strike Fighter jet.

In the next few years, the Navy will cease taking delivery of F/A-18 Super Hornets in favor of the F-35C, said John Pike, a Washington, D.C.-based national security analyst and founder of globalsecurity.org.

"I would expect that the base in your area will be among first to see these aircraft," Pike told The Citizen.

NAS Key West spokesman Jim Brooks said he would not be surprised if that were the case. Brooks said Boca Chica Field is well known for its open airspace, and it historically has drawn exotic aircraft.

The F-35C, a version of the Joint Strike Fighter designed to take off and land on aircraft carriers, will be the Navy's first stealth aircraft. Its electronics, radar and range are designed to leapfrog the F/A-18 and F-16 Fighting Falcons it replaces. The Pentagon hopes it will be the premiere jet fighter in the skies through 2040, second only to the Air Force's F-22 Raptor.

But Pike said he doesn't expect Lower Keys residents to notice much difference in noise levels when the planes arrive.

"The Super Hornet has about 44,000 pounds of thrust and the F-35C has about the same at 40,000," he said. "I don't expect it will be any louder or quieter, so probably about the same as to what your hearing now. That might be good or bad news."

Earlier this month, the Navy announced it will conduct a study to evaluate the noise impacts of the current F/A-18 Super Hornets and the F-35C that will replace it at NAS Key West starting in 2015.

Pike said 2015 is a nice round number, but that the timetable likely is optimistic.

"My opinion is to add a year to whatever their prediction is," he said. "The whole [Joint Strike Fighter] program has been battered by delays and slowdowns, but I'd say sooner than 10 years and more than five, to be fair. ... It remains to be seen how long or at what point the Navy lets go of the Super Hornet long enough for the F-35C to take over."

The economy, too, could delay the arrival of F-35Cs. Pike said it is the Pentagon's most expensive weapons system ever -- the entire project has cost about \$323 billion.

"The Navy budget is a train wreck," he said. "Neither of these airplanes are cheap. The Navy is going to try to use both aircraft in the initial stages."

While the F-35C may represent the future of Navy jet fighters, Pike predicts an even more futuristic version in less than two decades.

"At some point they're going to start testing these planes that can land on aircraft carriers in their sleep," he said, referring to pilotless aircraft. "They're going to have a big ribbon-cutting ceremony in the near future for the last F-35 with an ejection seat. That's where this program is headed."

Navy noise meetings start today

BY TIMOTHY O'HARA Citizen Staff

May 26, 2010

Residents are expected to give Navy officials an earful about jet noise and the potential for more and louder jets coming to Naval Air Station Key West, depending on the outcome of an impact study that requires public input.

U.S. Fleet Forces Command will hold two public hearings -- today and Thursday -- to take public comment on the impacts of current and future fighter jets used to train pilots at Boca Chica Field. At each of the meetings, the Navy will have large displays and one or more experts available to answer questions.

The meetings are part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), a detailed study that will evaluate jet noise and other environmental and public health impacts connected to activities at the Navy base.

A new fighter plane, the F-35C Joint Strike Fighter, could be used for regular training in the future. The Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps, all of which train at the local base, are slated to start using the F-35 by 2015. Some say it is louder than the F/A-18 Super Hornets currently used.

Fleet Forces also will evaluate the impacts of the Super Hornets and P-8A Poseidon, which will replace the P-3 aircraft that the military currently uses, Fleet Forces officials said.

Fleet Forces will take public input until June 10, either online or via comment cards to be provided at the two local meetings. Fleet Forces will issue a draft of its EIS in summer 2011, then take more public comment before finalizing it, project manager Joe Vlcek said.

Fleet Forces will issue the study to the secretary of the Navy with its findings and possible recommendations. Recommendations could include: keeping airfield operations the same; introducing new aircraft and keeping activity at the same level; or adding new aircraft and allowing more flights, Fleet Forces officials said.

In 2009, Boca Chica Field hosted 181 military squadrons, with 767 aircraft and 12,994 personnel. Each squadron stayed in the Keys for two weeks. Boca Chica hosted 220 squadrons in 2008 and 258 squadrons in 2007, base spokesman Jim Brooks said.

The base had 37,000 flight operations, which includes one takeoff and landing, in 2009. There were 36,000 in 2008 and 39,000 in 2007, Brooks said. By comparison, there were 120,000 flight operations in 1990.

"We are flying less than what we did 20 years ago," Brooks said. The Navy secretary will have the final say on how much fighter jet training will be allowed over the Lower

Keys, base commander Capt. Steven Holmes said.

The Navy will balance the concerns and public health risks of the community with fulfilling the military's mission at the base, Holmes said.

Tyndall makes final 4 cut for more F-22s

DANIEL CARSON / News Herald Writer

2010-05-26 12:40:42

Tyndall Air Force Base is one of four bases in the running for additional F-22 Raptors with a final decision to be announced by the Air Force in August, Rep. Allen Boyd said Wednesday.

The additional F-22 mission could bring up to 500 new jobs to the area if Tyndall is selected, he said.



Boyd and Bay Defense Alliance (BDA) officials have been trying to secure a follow-on mission at Tyndall in light of the ongoing drawdown of the base's two F-15 squadrons that started in April. The Air Force has not provided details on the number of F-22s that would come to any of the bases under consideration, Boyd said, or a timeline as to when the planes would arrive.

"We don't have a good idea yet when those planes would move," Boyd said.

The other bases being considered for additional F-22s are Elmendorf AFB in Alaska, Langley AFB in Virginia and Holloman AFB in New Mexico. All of the bases under consideration already have F-22s, Boyd said.

Boyd, the BDA and Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. Norton Schwartz met in November 2009 to discuss Tyndall's present and future missions, with the general offering assurances the base would retain its F-22 combat training mission. The mission includes the 29 F-22 Raptors assigned to the 325th Operations Group's 43rd Fighter Squadron.

That meeting came after the Air Force announced Tyndall did not make the Air Force's first group list of candidate locations for the F-35 Lightning II joint strike fighter.

Securing the future

Speaking at the Bay County Chamber of Commerce's downtown office, BDA member Glen McDonald said the BDA was excited about Tyndall being one of the four bases under consideration and confident the Air Force would select the base for an additional F-22 mission.

"Getting a flying mission here will secure Tyndall's future for a very long time," McDonald said.

A release from Boyd's office stated the Air Force will score each of the four bases being considered in accordance with specific criteria it has established, complete environmental impact studies of the bases and an operational needs assessment, with the goal of making a final decision in August.

McDonald said the Air Force's technical evaluation of all four bases would look at criteria such as existing infrastructure, personnel, runway length and the base's capacity to handle additional aircraft and people.

Boyd said the Air Force made it clear to him they were looking to consolidate the F-22s into four installations. He said a big factor in the Air Force's decision and movement of planes will be based on looking at the larger picture and the strategic placement of F-22s and F-35s, as well as what happens with the F-35 production schedule.

Tyndall's Gulf of Mexico test range is well-suited for air-to-air combat training, Boyd said, and its existing infrastructure and lack of encroachment issues will be advantages in securing an add-on F-22 training mission.

BDA President Tom Neubauer accompanied Boyd on the conference call.

In July 2009, Neubauer said the base originally was supposed to get up to 60 Raptors assigned to the base, but that number was reduced as production levels for the F-22 fighter were lowered.

Neubauer called the Air Force's announcement Wednesday an important milestone in the efforts to get a new mission at Tyndall.

"I think it's an important step in the right direction," Neubauer said.

Boyd said he also had included language in the Fiscal Year 2011 Defense Authorization bill that encourages the secretary of the Air Force to proceed with the relocation decision expeditiously and directs the secretary to complete a full cost-benefit analysis before the relocation decision is made to better understand the capacity at existing F-22 installations.

GEORGIA



Base traffic becoming a major challenge

May 25, 2010

By THOMAS L. DAY

WARNER ROBINS — Maj. Gen. Polly Peyer, commander of the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, told a group of community leaders Monday that traffic congestion coming into Robins Air Force Base is increasingly becoming a concern for base officials.

Peyer spoke during a four-hour Robins Regional Progress Report conference at the Museum of Aviation.

She recalled a long wait to enter the base after returning to the installation from an event last week.

“I was just amazed,” Peyer said. “Our folks face this every day.”

The topic of traffic congestion figures to become an increasingly elevated concern in the coming weeks.

On Memorial Day, the base will close its Russell Parkway entrance, Gate 14, for two months of renovations. The base will launch similar construction projects on the Watson Boulevard and Green Street gates after the Russell Parkway gate project is complete, Peyer said.

The closures come just as the base hires hundreds of additional maintenance workers and welcomes a small Marine Corps Reserve unit, which officially will relocate to Robins on June 23. There will be more people, with fewer gates to come through.

Peyer noted the Defense Logistics Agency will soon bring 30 additional cargo trucks in and out of the base every day, adding to the roughly 100 trucks the DLA already sends into the installation daily.

The looming traffic challenge has pushed carpooling efforts by base and local officials to the forefront.

“It’s a lot easier to check 50 people’s IDs on a bus than 50 cars,” Peyer said.

Col. Carl Buhler, commander of the 78th Air Base Wing, is leading an ad-hoc group of base and local officials who are looking at ways to alleviate the traffic problems, Peyer said.

Mary Therese Tebbe, executive director of the 21st Century Partnership, touted efforts by the Atlanta-based Clean Air Campaign supporting carpooling into the base.

“Did you know you could get paid to not drive your car to work?” she asked, referring to a range of federal and state-funded grants for participating in carpooling programs.

The Clean Air Campaign offers up to \$300 a month to support “vanpools” going into the base, among other incentives. More than \$17,000 in the last two years have been handed to Robins commuters to support carpooling, said R. Kenyon Thweatt, a Clean Air Campaign program manager.

Clean air, encroachment challenges

Base and local officials also discussed clean air initiatives and real estate encroachment of the base during the conference.

Macon Mayor Robert Reichert, chairman of the Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition, warned Houston County officials about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s tightening standards on pollution.

“We are going to have a very difficult challenge ahead of us,” he said.

The EPA intends to lower the bar this summer for ozone pollution levels permissible to avoid non-attainment status.

The EPA monitors levels of particulate, carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen oxide and sulfur pollution, placing geographic areas with unacceptably high levels of each pollutant on their non-attainment lists.

If Houston County is placed on any of the EPA’s lists, it could torpedo efforts to bring additional flying missions to the base, Reichert said.

The EPA intends to install air pollution sensors in towns larger than 50,000 people, he added. With recent population growth, the 2010 census may show Warner Robins has exceeded that mark.

“You may get yourselves a Christmas present you don’t really want,” Reichert said.

Chip Cherry, president and chief executive officer of the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, said efforts to purchase properties north of Robins have continued apace. Cherry has led local efforts to purchase homes in the immediate area north of Robins.

Out of the total 255 properties in the area, Cherry said he could purchase all but six “if I had \$7.8 million in my pocket right now.”

Six property owners in the area have indicated they are not willing to sell their properties, Cherry said.

NORTH CAROLINA



Cherry Point could get eight F-35 Joint Strike Fighters squadrons

May 26, 2010

HAVELOCK — Cherry Point would get eight squadrons of F-35 Joint Strike Fighters under the preferred basing plan proposed by the Navy.

The Navy released its draft environmental statement on the basing options for 11 operational squadrons and two fleet replacement squadrons this morning.

The F-35 is eventually scheduled to replace the current Marine Corps fleet of AV-8B Harriers, EA-6B Prowlers and F/A-18 Hornets.

Cherry Point currently has three operational Harrier squadrons, one training Harrier squadron and four squadrons of Prowlers at the base.

The Navy prefers to place the other three operational F-35 squadrons and two fleet replacement squadrons at Beaufort, S.C. That Marine Corps air base currently has seven squadrons of Hornets.

With up to 16 jets in each squadron, the Navy's preferred alternative could increase the number of aircraft at Cherry Point from 140 to 174. It also calls for nearly \$508 million in new construction, including the demolition of five old hangars and the construction of eight new modular hangars as well as a new air traffic control tower.

Despite the increase in the number of jets proposed, the Navy's preferred plan actually includes a reduction in the use of Bogue Field, an auxiliary landing field in Carteret County, by about

The Navy has scheduled public hearings on the proposed plan June 15 in Havelock, June 16 in Emerald Isle and June 17 in Bayboro and will also take written comments on the plan through July 12 before issuing its final basing report this fall, most likely in November. The Navy is expected to make its final decision in December.

The Navy's second preferred option would be to place all 11 operational squadrons at Cherry Point, while placing the two replacement squadrons in Beaufort, S.C.

SOUTH CAROLINA



At air station, expect 4,000 temporary jobs, noise when new jets arrive

By Patrick Donohue
May 26, 2010

Five new Joint Strike Fighter squadrons could bring more than 4,000 temporary construction jobs to Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort and create more jet noise for those living near the base, according to a Navy report released Wednesday.

The Navy released its draft environmental statement detailing how 11 operational squadrons and two training squadrons would be divided between MCAS Beaufort and MCAS Cherry Point, N.C.

The report recommended MCAS Beaufort receive both pilot training squadrons and three active-duty squadrons. MCAS Cherry Point would receive eight active-duty squadrons. If approved, MCAS Beaufort would receive 88 jets, each of which is worth up to \$90 million.

Each squadron has an expected economic impact of \$30 million to \$35 million, according to a report commissioned by the N.C. Eastern Regional Development Commission last month.

Carlotta Ungaro, president and CEO of the Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce, said the report recommended the alternative many in the area had hoped for.

"This is what we wanted," Ungaro said. "After consulting with our military folks here and at the Pentagon, we felt like this was the best option for our community in terms of an environment and economic impact."

Without getting some portion of the 13 squadrons, the air station would be vulnerable to closure once the Marine Corps replaces all of the F-18 Hornets currently at the base with the new fighter. The jet is the first fixed-wing aircraft the Corps has purchased in more than a decade. The public has between now and July 12 to submit comments to the Navy.

The Navy is expected to finalize the report in November and make its final decision on where to place the new squadrons by the end of the year. The Joint Strike Fighter is expected to arrive in Beaufort in 2014 or 2015.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, NOISE

If the Navy's preferred alternative is followed, landings and takeoffs at MCAS Beaufort will increase. Most likely, that will mean residents will hear jet noise more often, though it

is not clear yet if the noise made by the Joint Strike Fighter will be louder than that of the F-18s currently flown at the air station.

The report said the annual number of takeoffs and landings at the air station would nearly double, from 55,000 to 99,880.

According to the report, 8,725 residents living in 2,371 homes near the base will be exposed to noise levels greater than 65 decibels.

Gunnery Sgt. Chad McMeen, air station spokesman, said how noise from the new jet compares to the F-18 Hornet currently flown by air station pilots is difficult to predict because noise testing on the Marine Corps' variant of the Joint Strike Fighter, or the F-35B, has not been done.

The F-35A, a conventional take-off and landing version of the jet being built for the Air Force, creates between 83 decibels and 90 decibels of noise, according an Air Force environmental study released in October 2008. The same study showed that the noise created by the F-35A flying at 1,000 feet is three decibels louder than the F-18s flown by pilots at MCAS Beaufort at the same altitude.

According to Navy officials, a three decibel increase would be "barely perceptible."

McMeen said the air station receives an average of less than 20 noise complaints a year from residents.

The Joint Strike Fighter will replace all of the F-18s flown by air station pilots, as well as the Corps' AV-8B Harriers and the EA-6B Prowlers flown at MCAS Cherry Point.

Base officials will host a public meeting June 22 at the Holiday Inn in Beaufort to answer residents' questions about the possibility of the Joint Strike Fighter coming to the air station, McMeen said.

A similar meeting is scheduled for June 24 in Lodowici, Ga., which is near Townsend Bombing Range, McMeen said.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

To prepare for the arrival the new jet, the report estimated the base would need \$351.8 million in infrastructure improvements in the next five years, including a pilot-training center, new hangars and flight simulators. The base also will need to build vertical landing pads pilots will use to test the jet's vertical take-off and landing capabilities.

Expected to begin late this year or early 2011, the construction work would create nearly 4,400 temporary construction jobs over five years, the report said.

McMeen said base officials have been mulling plans to give the base a facelift for months prior to Wednesday's release of the report.

"Now that the report is out, we have more of a directed path," McMeen said. "This is what we anticipated."

The preferred alternative also would mean 294 fewer Marines stationed at the air station, though the report said those job losses probably would be offset by construction jobs, civilian contractor jobs associated with the arrival of the Joint Strike Fighter and student pilots training and living in Beaufort.

VIRGINIA



Navy to Norfolk Little Leaguers: Find a new home base

NORFOLK

For decades, Fleet Park Little Leaguers have shagged pop flies and swung for the fences on diamonds at Norfolk Naval Station.



Terrance Hatcher, 9, of the Yankees warms up before a game Wednesday, May 26, 2010 in Norfolk. After more than 50 years of play at Fleet Park, the Navy is asking the Little League to leave Norfolk Naval Station. (Amanda Lucier | The Virginian-Pilot)

Now, the Navy says the league's 2011 season at Fleet Park will be the last, because its six ballfields are in the flight path to Chambers Field, putting players at risk.

A recent study concluded the fields, not far off Hampton Boulevard, are in a designated "clear zone," or most likely crash site of the runway. A study in 1999 indicated the same results, but the league, with more than 550 players, was allowed to continue playing.

It's the second league to be evicted in two years. Ocean View

Little League played its final game on different fields on the Navy property last year and uses temporary digs while it looks for a permanent new home.

City officials say they might be hard-pressed to find new sites for the leagues.

The city spent \$450,000 to help refurbish Fleet Park in 1994 and was surprised to learn that the Navy now considers the ballfields incompatible with that property.

Councilman W. Randy Wright said hundreds of thousands of dollars also were donated for the renovation.

"There were some assurances made" that Fleet Park could continue to serve as a recreation facility, he said.

Terri Davis, public affairs officer at the naval station, said the Navy entered into a 10-year agreement with the city and the Fleet Park Little League in 1993.

"The memorandum states that it expires in 2003 and that at that time, all improvements on the field would revert to Navy possession," Davis said.

The Navy warned in 2001 that teams would not play there after 2003, because of the clear zone issue. Since 2003, Fleet Park Little League has used the field on a year-to-year basis, Davis said. Charlie Triplett, president of the league, said it spent \$38,000 last year on improvements. The league never would have invested that money if it had known eviction was a possibility, he said.

During a presentation to the City Council on Tuesday, Capt. K.M. Johnson, commanding officer of Norfolk Naval Station, defended the Navy's decision, saying the potential for a crash in Fleet Park, located a half mile from the airstrip, is just too high to allow hundreds of children to play baseball and softball there.

Mayor Paul Fraim, whose children once played at the field, asked Johnson whether the definitions of crash zones had changed since 1994, and Johnson acknowledged they had not.

"I cannot speak for previous management," Johnson said. "I don't know why they allowed entities like this to operate. They should not be allowed to operate in this area. We realize it's not popular."

"But on the other hand, it would not be popular to allow this to occur if something were to happen."

At least one high school, Norfolk Collegiate, also uses the park.

Last year, Ocean View Little League, formerly Naval Air Station Little League, was evicted from a 2.8-acre site on Navy property because of a pending construction project. It had played on the Navy's property for 52 years.

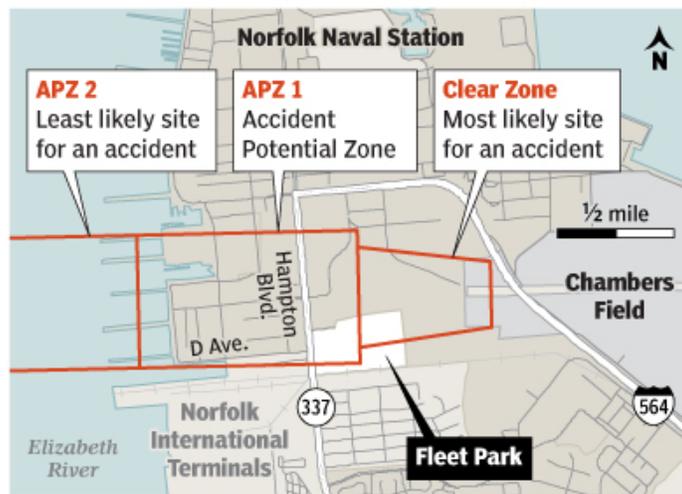
This season, the league, which has 28 teams and about 350 players, shares the fields occupied by Azalea Little League at the Norfolk Industrial Park on Pineridge Road.

Ocean View Little League president Tony Snyder said he knew about eight years ago that his league's days on federal property were numbered.

The league has identified a potential site behind Ocean View Elementary School and is in talks with the city, Snyder said. Fraim said finding places for the two leagues to play now is clearly in the city's lap.

LITTLE LEAGUE GETS TOSSED

Norfolk has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in Fleet Park, but a large little league is getting booted off the Navy base because it's in the flight path danger zone - and has been for decades.



SOURCES: Navy, ESRI, Tele Atlas

THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

The city responded to similar pleas in the 1980s by helping relocate the Little Creek National Pony League from Virginia Beach to Tarrallton Park and the Azalea Little League to its current site.

"We're going to hear from hundreds and hundreds of parents asking, 'Where are our kids going to play?' " Fraim said. "These leagues have been entrenched in this community for years. We have to do what we can to help."

City Manager Regina V.K. Williams circulated a memo to council members Tuesday suggesting a short-term solution could be spreading the two leagues to various city fields all over the city.

Fraim said that can't be a long-term solution, as it is impractical for families with children playing in different age groups to drive to several locations. Fraim asked Williams "to put together a group to try and work with the leagues to come up with a solution."

Fraim said the city will appeal the decision to the Navy, as well as the city's congressional delegation. At worst, he said, he hopes to get an extension. The Navy's stand, however, seems firm. The Navy has explored the possibility of alternative sites for the leagues on the naval station, but has no acceptable locations, Navy spokeseson Davis said.

"We've been very, very fortunate in the past that nothing has happened."

WASHINGTON



May 22, 2010

Navy Releases Final Proposal on Expanding Navy Test Ranges

Ed Friedrich

The Navy's final proposal to expand three underwater test ranges was released for public review on Friday. People have until June 21 to comment about the plan to enlarge ranges near Keyport, in Hood Canal, and off the Washington coast.

The Navy, according to the preferred alternatives in its Final Environmental Impact Statement, wants to:

—Extend its Keyport range from 1.5 square nautical miles to 3.2 and the average number of days it would be used each year from 55 to 60;

—Enlarge the Dabob Bay range from 32.7 square nautical miles to 45.7 with no increase in the 200-day annual use;

—Expand the Quinault range in the Pacific Ocean from 48.3 square nautical miles to 1,840, including a new 7.8-square-nautical-mile surf zone at Pacific Beach. The average annual use offshore would increase from 14 to 16 days and testing in the surf would occur an average of 30 days per year.

The Navy took comments on its draft EIS, released in October 2008, but they didn't lead to changes to the preferred alternatives in the final version, said Keyport spokeswoman Diane Jennings.

Naval Underwater Warfare Center-Keyport uses the ranges to test manned and unmanned underwater vehicles. As technology improves and the vehicles' ranges grow, it needs more area to test them. And changing threats make the Navy more likely to operate submarines near the shore, hence the addition of a surf zone.

"We just need larger operating areas so we can keep up with developing technologies that we need to test," Jennings said.

Among the greatest concerns voiced during the environmental process was that the ranges would be closed more often to recreational use.

"There are no plans to close anything off," Jennings said. "There might be a delay while we're running a test and we need it quiet."

The Navy analyzed potential effects of the proposal on marine animals, plants, upland wildlife, water quality, and public health and safety. It found no significant problems that can't be mitigated

The final EIS — all 1,134 pages of it — is posted at

www.navsea.navy.mil/nuwc/keyport/Environmental/EIS.aspx

Written comments will be taken electronically or can be mailed to Kimberly Kler, Naval Facilities Command, 1101 Tautog Circle, Suite 203, Silverdale, 98315-1101 or faxed to her at (360) 396-0857.

After the comment period, the Navy will sign a record of decision, probably no sooner than July, Jennings said. Then there's a 30-day waiting period before it can begin operating in the new areas.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Star-Telegram

Naval Air Station Fort Worth deploying 'green' initiatives

Posted Tuesday, May 25, 2010

By **CHRIS VAUGHN**

cvaughn@star-telegram.com

FORT WORTH -- Energy efficiency is on the mind of every homeowner, but the same could be said of Uncle Sam.

Officials at Naval Air Station Fort Worth are increasingly embracing greener initiatives to reduce electricity, gas, water and fuel consumption and use alternative energy sources.

The military and its leaders are interested for reasons beyond helping the Earth: Every dollar spent on the light bill is a dollar not spent on ammunition or training, not to mention the recognition that Middle East oil carries with it a significant foreign policy and military impact.

"Energy, how we generate it and use it, is of major consequence to the sustainability of our war-fighting readiness," said the base commander, Capt. T.D. Smyers. "NAS Fort Worth is aggressively finding appropriate alternate energy sources while reducing consumption.

"It's part of being a responsible partner in green efforts across the government. It represents responsible use of tax dollars, and it's the only reliable way to sustain our war-fighting capability while reducing our dependence on overseas sources."

Few people outside the base will ever be aware of the initiatives because access is restricted, none of them can be easily seen from Texas 183, and they are largely aimed at incrementally reducing consumption. The government requires 3 percent cuts every year.

Last fall, the base signed a 15-year agreement with an energy services company to upgrade the lighting, heating/air conditioning and energy management systems that officials say will cut 28 million British thermal units in consumption every year, a dramatic reduction in dozens of buildings.

The base has dropped its energy consumption per square foot by 14 percent since 2003, better than required by the Defense Department. But with the low-hanging fruit mostly gone, base officials have to get more creative.

By signing on with the energy services company, the base expects savings of more than \$700,000 a year over the life of the contract, said Nelson Wells, resource efficiency manager for the base.

"The benefit from our perspective is that they go out and find the money to recapitalize the equipment," Wells said. "We pay them back with the energy savings, which they guarantee, and when the contract is over, we get to keep all the savings."

The energy company is also constructing a 10-kilowatt solar panel to help power several buildings, and it is creating a master control system in the public works building to better control the heating and air-conditioning systems basewide. Leaving the thermostat to individual units has proved too wasteful, Wells said.

"There are lots of buildings where the A/C is always on," he said. "We've got to capture savings there by better regulating the systems."

All the services on base, led by the Navy, are exploring ways to create alternative energy too.

The Air Force uses solar power to produce energy for parking-lot lighting, and the Navy has installed two small wind turbines to produce power for a warehouse, which is a test project to see whether more can be done with wind.

"It's the perfect time of year for wind," Wells said, "but because we're an air station, we're limited how much we can use it. We can't build big wind turbines here. We're also right on the edge of really favorable winds, which tend to be better 100 miles west. We're going to try it anyway."

The base is also replacing its giant steel hangar doors with fabric doors that are partially translucent, allowing for more natural light and therefore less electricity usage.

Increasingly, the mode of transportation on the base for errand-running is small electric cars, which are growing more common at many Defense Department installations. The Navy, Air Force and Air National Guard operate 99 of them now, and as a result, fewer gasoline vehicles.

Because water has been a tougher nut, for unexplained reasons, Smyers recently signed off on an order that prohibits using the last sprinkler systems still in operation. Hand-watering the landscaping around buildings is still permitted, but that's it.

"Whatever the Lord provides us is what we're going to get," Wells said. "We're supposed to be reducing our water consumption by 2 percent a year, and we're not meeting that. So we've got to get more aggressive."

In some cases, the environmental initiatives are more defensive in nature.

For instance, the base has been gradually removing underground storage tanks because of the risk of chemical and fuel leakage. At one time, the base had 35 underground tanks. It now has three.

"It's a whole lot easier to inspect a tank when you can see the tank," said Robert Myer Jr., the base's environmental director. "That greatly reduces our environmental liability."

Defense Environment Alert

an exclusive biweekly report on defense policies for cleanup, compliance and pollution prevention

5/25/2010

House Committee Approves DOD Wind Energy Encroachment Measure

The House Armed Services Committee has included a measure in the just-approved fiscal year 2011 defense authorization bill that aims to curtail 11th-hour conflicts over military readiness and private-sector wind turbine projects as renewable energy projects, such as wind farm proposals, are increasing and becoming a significant encroachment issue for the military.

The committee approved a measure that aims to address obstruction of military activities due to the operation of wind farms -- coming on the heels of a high-profile conflict related to the Pentagon's concerns over a major wind farm proposed for Oregon that raised protests in the Pentagon over its impacts on radar.

DOD backed down from its opposition in late April, vowing to work with the National Security Council and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to avert confrontations with wind energy developers in the future (Defense Environment Alert, May 11). The issue arose as the Obama administration, including DOD, is pushing for increased renewable energy projects such as wind energy, with DOD attempting to strike a tone of balance between support of the administration's renewable energy goals while being mindful of potential impacts on homeland security. A high-level DOD environment official recently noted that the processes in place to review such projects are inadequate to handle the volume of work now being seen on the renewable energy front.

The committee approved the energy encroachment measure during full committee markup on the FY11 defense authorization bill, H.R. 5136, which passed out of committee on a 59-0 vote May 19.

The measure was part of en bloc amendments sponsored by Rep. Solomon Ortiz (D-TX), chairman of the Armed Services readiness subcommittee. The amendment directs the defense secretary to designate a single entity within DOD to coordinate with the FAA "on aviation obstruction impacts on military installations and operations" and to accelerate the planning tools being developed that DOD will use to give notice of its position on new energy proposals that may obstruct aviation, according to a description of the amendment released by the committee. The committee declined to release the amendment language.

Members on the committee voiced their need for the language both during subcommittee and full committee markups. "The subcommittee has also been concerned about readiness challenges associated with wind-farm obstruction of military training routes and radar," Ortiz said during the subcommittee markup May 13. "In the end, we need to establish a process that better balances energy security and military readiness, because our nation needs both."

During consideration of the amendment in the full committee markup, Ortiz said the measure would establish a common process whereby early input from the military can be given.

And during the readiness subcommittee markup, Rep. Randy Forbes (R-VA) detailed why he believes the amendment is necessary. "I strongly support alternative energy projects, but we must give the Department of Defense an opportunity to review these projects and notify the developers of any impact on military training and readiness early in the process," Forbes said. "As it stands now, there's no requirement to notify DOD of wind farm developments, and as a result, they find out so late in the process that any objection they need to raise in the interest of military readiness jeopardizes the entire development." That is not good for the developers or DOD, he added.

The measure was included in the full committee markup after the subcommittee held off on marking up a provision because of jurisdictional issues. Ortiz said the final amendment does not achieve all of his goals, but he did not elaborate on how it falls short.

ENERGY POLICY



Official explains approach to climate change, energy

May 24, 2010

By **Sgt. 1st Class Michael J. Carden, American Forces Press Service**

WASHINGTON (May 21, 2010) -- Developing a deliberate approach to energy and climate change is an important platform to national security and the U.S. military mission, a senior Defense Department official told members of Congress here yesterday.

Dorothy Robyn, deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and environment, testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee about the Pentagon's take on the California Desert Protection Act of 2010.

The proposal, introduced to Congress in December, requests that hundreds of thousands of acres of federally granted land belonging to military installations and school systems in the Southwest be designated as national park wilderness areas.

The plan also would permit construction of transmission lines to facilitate renewable energy transfer in these wilderness areas and provide solar energy companies with potential projects.

"The Department of Defense supports these goals and we want to work closely with the committee to ensure that military renewable energy and environmental equities are protected as you further develop this legislation," Robyn said in her written statement. "As the Quadrennial Defense Review made clear, crafting a strategic approach to energy and climate change is a high priority for the department."

Pentagon research has determined that the military's heavy reliance on oil and fossil fuels comes with risks to its tactical and strategic agenda, Robyn said. Continued use of these resources without eventually finding alternate energy will result in "lost dollars, in reduced mission effectiveness and in U.S. soldiers' lives," she explained.

"Unleashing warfighters from the tether of [fossil] fuel and reducing our military installations' dependence on a costly and potentially fragile power grid will not [only] simply enhance the environment, it will significantly improve our mission effectiveness," she added.

Robyn acknowledged that the department's installations - some 300,000 buildings and 2.2 billion square feet of floor space - account for nearly 30 percent of the department's energy use. The Pentagon spent \$4 billion on energy for permanent installations in 2009, she said, noting the department's pledge to reduce greenhouse emissions by 34 percent during the next decade.

"The expansion of renewable energy development on our installations will be key to meeting that goal," she said. "Combined with appropriate technologies and necessary energy assurance policies, the development of renewable energy can help military installations provide greater mission assurance."

Robyn noted examples of the military's pursuit of renewable energy, citing progress at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., where a 14-megawatt photovoltaic solar energy system saves \$1 million a year in electricity costs and avoids 24,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Also, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Calif., has been operating a 270-megawatt geothermal plant since 1987, Robyn said. She added that the Navy is working with the Army to tap into geothermal resources as well.

Some renewable energy, however, can be problematic for military installations, she acknowledged. Robyn described how wind turbines and solar towers can interfere with aircraft navigation and other radars. She also noted that the land on many military installations is home to protected wildlife, and that solar projects increase competition for water supply.

"We are working actively both to identify potential problems well in advance of [selecting sites] and to develop better mitigation technology," she said. "However, some conflicts may be unavoidable, and sustaining our ability to conduct our current and projected mission requirements must be our overriding consideration."

Despite these issues, the military is committed to helping the development of renewable and alternative resources, she said. She acknowledged the importance of the legislation to the military and the partnership between the military and lawmakers in drafting the bill.

"As a result of that collaboration, the bill incorporates many provisions that address and protect our operations," Robyn said. "The military has significant interests and equities in federal policy dealing with the development of renewable and alternative energy sources."

**Statement of
Dr. Dorothy Robyn
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
(Installations and Environment)
Before the
Senate Committee on
Energy and Natural Resources
S. 2921, California Desert Protection Act of 2010
May 20, 2010**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and provide preliminary comments on S. 921, the California Desert Protection Act of 2010, introduced by Senator Feinstein. This bill represents a significant and laudable effort to preserve the environment and promote the development of renewable energy while at the same time protecting the ability of the U.S. military to carry out its mission. The Department of Defense supports these goals and we want to work closely with the committee to ensure that military, renewable energy, and environmental equities are protected as you further develop this legislation. We defer to the Department of Interior and Agriculture with respect to provisions that solely concern their lands and interests.

As the Quadrennial Defense Review made clear, crafting a strategic approach to energy and climate change is a high priority for the Department. This reflects mission considerations above all. The Department's own analysis confirms what outside experts have long warned: our military's heavy reliance on oil and other fossil fuels creates significant risks and costs at a tactical as well as a strategic level. They can be measured in lost dollars, in reduced mission effectiveness and in U.S. soldiers' lives. Unleashing warfighters from the tether of fuel and reducing our military installations' dependence on a costly and potentially fragile power grid will not simply enhance the environment, it will significantly improve our mission effectiveness.

Renewable and alternative energy represents a critical plank in the Department's energy security platform. Military installations—many of them located in the Southwest and along our coasts—are well-situated to support large-scale solar, wind and geothermal energy projects that are carefully sited and developed in ways that are consistent with our current and projected military mission requirements. The development of such mission compatible renewable energy to support our military installations can help the Department achieve two important goals.

First, it can help the Department reduce its costly reliance on fossil fuels and the related greenhouse gas emissions they generate. DoD's permanent installations, which include some 300,000 buildings and 2.2 billion square feet of floor space, account for about 28 percent of the Department's total energy usage (\$4 billion in 2009). Installations account for even more of DoD's greenhouse gas emissions—nearly 40 percent—because of their reliance on the commercial electricity grid, which is heavily powered by coal. The Department has pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from non-combat activities by 34 percent over the next decade, and the expansion of renewable energy development on our installations will be key to meeting that goal.

Second, combined with appropriate technologies and necessary energy assurance policies, the development of renewable energy can help military installations provide for greater mission assurance. According to the Defense Science Board, the increasing fragility of the commercial grid to cyber attack, natural disaster and other threats places the continuity of critical military missions at growing risk.¹ When combined with microgrid technology and energy efficiency investments that significantly reduce demand, distributed renewable energy sources can assist in allowing installations to carry out mission-critical activities and support restoration of the grid in the event of disruption.

The military has been actively pursuing solar, wind, geothermal and other forms of renewable and alternative energy to achieve these and other goals. For example, Nellis Air Force Base in southern Nevada built a 14-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic solar array: more than 72,000 solar panels track the sun to generate 30 million kilowatt-hours of electricity per year—equivalent to a quarter of the total power used at the 16,000+ population base. As with most renewable energy projects on military installations, Nellis took advantage of third-party financing. Nellis saves \$1 million a year in electricity costs and avoids 24,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions. The military's interest in renewable energy is nothing new. Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake in California has been operating a 270-MW geothermal plant since 1987.

The heat from 166 wells, some of them 12,000 feet deep, is sufficient to light up 180,000 homes. The Navy is helping the Army tap into geothermal resources at its Weapons Depot in Hawthorne, Nevada, and that project will be capable of producing 30 MW of clean power. Working to further develop and deploy advanced geothermal technologies to make this a viable strategy at additional installations may be an important element of our energy assurance program.

Also relevant is the Department's effort to use DoD's installations as a test bed for next generation energy technologies coming out of industry, Department of Energy and university laboratories. These include technologies to improve the conservation and efficiency of building energy, control and management of local energy loads, as well as on-site alternative and renewable energy generation. DoD can assess the performance, cost, and environmental impact of these advanced, pre-commercial technologies. For those technologies that prove effective, DoD can serve as an early customer, helping create a market, as it did with aircraft, electronics and the internet. This approach is key to meeting the Department's needs but it is also an essential element of a national strategy to develop and deploy the next generation of energy technologies needed to support our built infrastructure.

Despite the Department's support for renewable energy, specific renewable energy projects can pose problems for the military. Let me discuss three situations.

¹ "More Fight-Less Fuel," Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on DoD Energy Strategy, February 2008

First, the siting of a large-scale renewable energy project on or near a military installation may not be compatible with the current or projected mission of the installation. For example, wind turbines or a solar tower can interfere with mission-critical navigation or other radar. We are working actively both to identify potential problems well in advance of siting and to develop better mitigation technology. However, some conflicts may be unavoidable, and sustaining our ability to conduct our current and projected mission requirements must be our overriding consideration.

A second potential conflict arises from the fact that military installations, which represent some of the best protected and most pristine land in the federal inventory, are home to many threatened and endangered species and other species at risk. Such an installation may not be able to accommodate the construction of, for instance, a large solar facility if it would adversely affect sensitive habitat. Even if the proposed site for a solar facility were outside of the installation fence, the facility could negatively affect military operations by placing additional burdens on the installation for species recovery or by potentially increasing the vulnerability of installation populations.

A third potential conflict has to do with the competition for water. The same areas that are ideally suited to large solar projects also typically face severe water shortages. The construction of such a solar project on or near an installation will almost always increase the competition for water supplies that are already scarce and which may become even more scarce in the future. In addition to putting pressure on the military mission directly, this can make it even more difficult for an installation to maintain its sensitive habitat and the threatened and endangered species it sustains.

In sum, the military has significant interests and equities in federal policy dealing with the development of renewable and alternative energy sources. This is particularly the case with respect to energy development in the Mojave and Colorado Deserts, where we conduct an enormous amount of testing, training and other operational activity. The test and training ranges in this unique part of the country are among the Department's most valuable and irreplaceable installations, often described as our "crown jewels."

We are grateful to Senator Feinstein for recognizing how important this legislation is to the military and for working so cooperatively with the Department's regional environmental staff in California prior to introducing the bill. As a result of that collaboration, the bill incorporates many provisions that address and protect our operations. Below, I mention some of them. I also highlight several sections where the Department's initial review has revealed the need for further discussion. We will provide a letter to the Committee detailing our comments after we have had an opportunity to review the legislation in depth.

Title I – California Desert Conservation and Recreation

We appreciate that, throughout Title I, the bill recognizes that the military is an essential presence in both the proposed Mojave Trails National Monument and the Sand to Snow National Monument. Let me cite three examples:

- The bill includes representatives from the Department of Defense on the Advisory Committee for both Monuments, giving us an important role in their long term management.

- The bill excludes certain areas from the Mojave Trails National Monument pending possible withdrawal and addition to the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, protecting our options to address future mission needs.
- In establishing the Avawatz Mountains, Golden Valley, and Soda Mountains Wilderness Areas adjacent to Fort Irwin, the Great Falls Basin Wilderness Area adjacent to China Lake and the Kingston Range Wilderness Area to the east of Fort Irwin, the bill protects the authority of the Secretary of Defense to conduct military activities at desert installations, facilities, and ranges. Particularly critical is the language explicitly protecting those military activities that can be seen or heard from within the Wilderness Areas.

Nevertheless, to ensure that our activities are protected, we must better understand the bill's land management requirements in total, particularly as they relate to our ability to conduct testing, training, and operational activities and our responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act to protect threatened and endangered species and the associated critical habitat.

We see many potential benefits to the bill's approach—namely, the designation of large monument and wilderness areas as off-limits to development. This approach may protect our installations from the encroachment that such development could cause. Having these areas protected may expand critical habitat and spread species management responsibilities over a larger area, thereby lessening the pressures on the species and on DoD's land management responsibilities. Precluding development in these areas would also reduce the competition for limited water resources. On the other hand, the limitation of development in certain areas would likely steer development to other areas, which may not be compatible with our current and projected mission requirements in every case.

Therefore, we need to conduct a detailed, site-by-site analysis in light of our current and projected missions to understand the full implications of Title I.

Title II – Desert Renewable Energy Permitting

One thrust of Title II would be to concentrate renewable energy development in particular geographic areas within the Mojave Desert. This is potentially quite beneficial the designation of specific areas for renewable energy development would facilitate such development by giving developers and Federal agencies alike clear parameters early in the planning process, by facilitating coordination with ongoing regional planning efforts at the local, state, and federal levels, and by streamlining that process in numerous other ways. Depending on where those areas are located, however, the concentration of renewable energy development could be incompatible with the Department's current and projected mission requirements. Here, again, we would need to conduct a more detailed analysis.

In addition, based on our preliminary review of the legislation, there are three specific sections in Title II that are of particular interest or that raise potential concerns for the Department.

Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Sec. 203)

We appreciate the bill's intent to have federal agencies evaluate the environmental impacts of renewable energy in a programmatic manner, early in the process. This approach enables a more strategic assessment of the range of options and the associated direct, indirect and cumulative impacts. By evaluating these impacts earlier, it shortens the process when we move to site specific decisions while ensuring that we better understand the cumulative impacts of each project.

The Department is, however, concerned with the time restrictions included in the bill. As you can appreciate, for the results of this programmatic environmental impact statement to improve the quality of our siting process and our land management decisions, we need to gather the appropriate information and apply a rigorous and complete environmental analysis. To ensure that this is a thoughtful and meaningful process, we believe it will take significantly more time than currently provided in the bill. Moreover, in the interests of efficiency and overall environmental protection, any programmatic assessment for renewable energy options by DoD should be produced concurrently with assessments done by the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and other federal agencies to coordinate efforts, scope, regional coverage, use of data and desired outcomes.

Military Installations Study (Sec. 204)

The military installations study directs the Department to assess the financial, environmental, and national security implications of renewable energy development on military installations in the Mojave and Colorado Deserts in the States of California and Nevada. This area includes many large and critical military installations and contains some of the most important testing and training ranges within the Department of Defense. Renewable energy is a critical component of the Department's energy strategy and this region of the country has significant renewable energy resources that could be exploited. Section 204 identifies important issues that the Department must consider as we continue to develop renewable energy programs. The Department needs to understand the full impacts of renewable energy development on our installations. We have already initiated plans to conduct such a study based on language in the Department of Defense Appropriations Act for FY 2010.

Renewable Energy Coordination Offices (Sec. 201)

We appreciate the Senator's efforts to make the Department an integral part of the Federal permit coordination process. Renewable energy siting decisions in this region, on or off military installations, must comport with military activities in order to ensure the viability of our training, testing, and operations, to safeguard the public, and to protect the security of sensitive activities.

We believe some aspects of the prescribed process and structure need clarification. First, it is not clear if the Renewable Energy Coordination Offices that the bill would create will have permitting authority for all Federal lands in these states or only those lands currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). We have the overriding responsibility to protect our ability to perform testing, training, and operational missions on all of our installations, including those formed in whole or in part from lands withdrawn from the public domain. The Department of Defense already has a permitting

process, under its separate authorities, for lands under its management. This process works well to ensure that appropriate energy production occurs on such lands, without interfering with the mission of the Department. The Department's authorities provide strong incentives to installation commanders to pursue such projects. Although the Department's own permitting process would benefit from additional coordination with the permitting process of BLM, it would not be beneficial to limit the authority of the Department with regard to permitting on our installations.

In addition, siting of renewable energy facilities and associated infrastructure on private and state lands has the potential to have a significant impact on our testing, training, and operational missions. It is not clear that the permitting process outlined in the bill adequately addresses the critical interaction of Federal agencies with state and local permitting processes.

Conclusion

We strongly support the goals of S. 2921—namely, to advance renewable energy while protecting the environment and protecting our current and projected military missions.

We will provide additional views on the bill in the near future. Along with the other federal agencies, the Department of Defense looks forward to working closely with the Committee in the coming months to address the issues we have highlighted today.

ENHANCED USE LEASE



Progress slow but steady with more Falcon Hill planning than construction

By Mitch Shaw (Standard-Examiner Davis Bureau)

Last Edit: May 21 2010 - 10:21pm

HILL AIR FORCE BASE -- The Falcon Hill project at Hill Air Force Base will be a tremendous boost to the local economy, officials say. However, one question still remains: When does construction start?

A groundbreaking ceremony that included military leaders, dignitaries and local politicians such as Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, took place at Hill in October 2008, but since then, not much more ground has been broken.

The first major construction for the development will include moving the security fence at Hill's West Gate farther east, beginning construction on two new buildings, and a reconfiguration of 650 North, the Clearfield road used to access Hill's West Gate.

But when that construction will begin is still up in the air.

"There is no date set yet for construction," said Darrin Wray, chief of the Enhanced Use Lease office at Hill. "We're still waiting on a few things."

The project is the largest EUL project in the history of the Air Force and one of the first EUL projects to reach the development phase.

It encompasses 550 acres on Hill's west side and is a \$1.5 billion public-private venture of the state of Utah, Hill Air Force Base and Woodbury Corporation allowing private entities to lease underutilized military land.

The first two buildings to go up will include a new gate house and a building to house Hill's Intercontinental Ballistic Missile group. The building will be owned and operated by Northrop Grumman Corp. and leased to the Air Force.

Sen. Jerry Stevenson, R-Layton, sits on the Military Installation Development Authority board, the group that facilitates negotiations between developers, the Air Force and local municipalities.

Stevenson said the Air Force has taken a methodical approach to the process.

"Everything is just kind of sitting in place right now, because we're kind of waiting on the Air Force to make some decisions," he said.

"They are really going to be the ones who turn the pigeons loose on this thing."

In addition to government office buildings, the land will include nearly 2 million square feet of business space in the first phase.

Wray said involved parties also are still trying to lure tenants to the park.

"With the economy the way it is, we're still slowly trying to attract tenants," he said.

"And we're still awaiting Air Force approval on the first commercial building as well."

Wray said Falcon Hill hopes to bring military-related contractors such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing and ATK to support missions that are already ongoing at Hill.

Stevenson said the Air Force may seem to move at a slow pace on ventures like Falcon Hill, but the project will ultimately be a success because of that.

"Sometimes they can move a bit on the slow slide," he said, "but they are methodical because they want to get things right. Once they make a decision, they are dedicated to it."

Both Stevenson and Wray say the project is moving forward, despite the lack of actual construction.

OFFSHORE DRILLING

Mother Jones SMART, FEARLESS JOURNALISM

DOD: We Hate Offshore Drilling, Too

By Adam Weinstein

Fri May. 21, 2010 12:34

Now we have a leak to go with that spill. It's been roughly a month since BP's oil-rig disaster, and as our on-the-ground reporter Mac McClelland showed yesterday, the Gulf of Mexico is now starting to resemble the pit of a Jiffy Lube. There's been no shortage of opprobrium heaped on the energy lobby and its political apologists of late, with even erstwhile conservatives criticizing the "drill, baby, drill" crowd as anti-environment and anti-economic-prosperity. How could it get worse for (mainly Republican) champions of lubrication *laissez faire*?

How about if it's discovered that outer continental shelf drilling is also anti-national-security? That's exactly what the Department of Defense appears to have done in a leaked portion of its new report (PDF), appropriately titled "Outer Continental Shelf (OCS): Military Activities and Future Oil & Gas Development." You see, the new conservative Virginia governor and shadow commander in chief, Bob McDonnell, longs to penetrate Virginia's sea plain with hard probes for profit. His plan was to make 4,500 square miles of ocean available to oil drillers by 2010. But! According to the *Washington Post*:

The Defense Department report, concluded in March but released in part Tuesday by Rep. James P. Moran Jr. (D-Va.), a drilling opponent, indicates that drilling would interfere with military activities...in 72 percent of the 3 million acres covered by the lease sale and that it could be allowed only with restrictions in 6 percent of the area.

As a former sailor who's operated out of Norfolk, Virginia—the world's largest naval installation—I can attest that its sea lanes are rather critical to effective military activities. Ships need to move through quickly and safely when deploying, and that process gets harder when additional surface contacts and navigational hazards are thrown into the brew. (Submarines, which also operate extensively in the area, face a special three-dimensional, life-or-death challenge with undersea drilling infrastructures.) Fleet training exercises, tactical readiness exams, sea trials of new ships, and many other classified but important endeavors begin off the Tidewater coast.

In fact, Norfolk hosts five aircraft carrier groups—one of which, the USS Truman carrier strike group, just departed today for the Persian Gulf. Pretty safe to assume they keep a tight movement schedule to get to a war zone. Do you really want your Hummer's hydrocarbon hunger to cost them an extra day on that trip?

Now, Big Oil wasn't totally unprepared for this line of attack. One of its mouthpieces, Securing America's Future Energy (SAFE), has a report on its website extolling how the military thinks offshore drilling is totally hunky dory for its operations. The report's military "experts" were retired paid consultants.

But here's the really fun part: The oil flacks' report, which was published in January, didn't focus on the Virginia shore, where it would interfere most with US defense readiness: It focused on the Eastern Gulf of Mexico from Pensacola, Florida, to Key West. Where there's, you know, an expanding oil plume. Rest assured *MoJo* will be on the phone to NAS P'cola, Eglin Air Force Base, and NAS Key West next week to see if they've scrubbed any flight, surface, or other training ops—or had resources diverted to combat the slick.

This should probably matter to strong-on-defense neocons, paleocons, and the like for obvious reasons of principle. But the GOP also has compelling political reasons to kill the drill: You don't want to take on the DOD, which usually (and in this case, rightly) gets what it wants. As the AP reports:

The Pentagon cannot unilaterally veto drilling proposals, but Dorothy Robyn, deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and environment, said the Defense and Interior departments have a long history of cooperation, and drilling has never taken place in an area objected to by the military.

"We have every expectation that if we said we need an area ... that they would fully honor that," Ms. Robyn said.

Dear reader, expect a follow-up soon.

Defense Environment Alert

an exclusive biweekly report on defense policies for cleanup, compliance and pollution prevention

5/25/2010

Pressure Rises For Dropping Virginia Drilling Plan Due To Military Impacts

Lawmakers are increasing pressure on the Obama administration to drop plans to allow oil and gas drilling off the Virginia coast, citing recently disclosed Defense Department briefing materials indicating drilling would affect a wide swath of military test and training areas off the state.

Lawmakers from East coast states are putting the pressure on the administration to discard the plan -- and are signaling concerns over opening up other drilling along the Florida Atlantic coast as well -- pointing to the detrimental effects drilling could have on military readiness at a time when activists are questioning expanded drilling given the high environmental costs of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Last week, mid-Atlantic senators urged President Obama to abandon all plans for oil and gas development off of Virginia, citing foremost the impacts to a major military training area, and secondly, the "enormous environmental and economic risks" to their states from such a move.

They credit Obama for postponing plans on the Virginia lease sale in light of the massive Gulf of Mexico oil spill and the safety and environmental concerns stemming from that. At the same time, they say even if safety were guaranteed -- oil and gas exploration off the Virginia coast "would still interfere with ongoing naval operations," in the Virginia Capes Operating Area (VACAPES), a key testing and training range near the Navy's largest base in Norfolk.

In late March, Obama announced the administration's plan to open new offshore areas for oil and natural gas leasing, including off Virginia. But following the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in April, the Interior Department (DOI) in a Federal Register notice May 7 suspended plans for a lease sale of areas off the Virginia coast.

The concerns over military impacts on the Virginia drilling plan, expressed in a May 20 letter to Obama from Sens. Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Benjamin Cardin (D-MD) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), follow on the heels of the release by Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA) of information obtained during a DOD briefing with the congressman indicating the broad impact that such exploration would have on the military. The briefing materials indicate that 72 percent of the Virginia lease sale area is being used by the Navy for training, testing and other exercises that are not compatible with any oil and gas activity, according to the senators in the letter. "Oil and gas surface structures on an additional 5% of the lease sale area would also interfere with naval operations," they say. The briefing materials are a DOD assessment of DOI's Minerals Management Service oil and gas leasing program for 2012-2017. Relevant documents are available on InsideEPA.com.

In addition, the BP oil spill is raising new concerns about whether drilling allowed near military areas, but out of interference with training, could pose problems for the military should an oil spill occur. The senators say if a spill comparable to the BP incident occurred off Virginia in non-military operating areas, it would halt all training activities in the VACAPES for months. "Such a disruption in a time of war is simply a risk we should not take," they say.

"For these reasons as well as the obvious environmental and economic hazards associated with the plan, we urge you to eliminate this proposed lease sale," they say.

And Moran, in a May 18 letter to Virginia Gov. Robert F. McDonnell (R), a proponent of offshore drilling, discourages him from supporting drilling operations given the military impacts, as well as economic effects. Moran points out that DOI has indicated the suspension may not delay the Virginia offshore lease sale. "The unimpeded operation of the US Navy off the coast of Virginia is far more important to the Commonwealth's economy than even the most optimistic revenue estimates that might come from offshore drilling more than a decade from now," he says in a press statement.

While DOD officials have generally been quiet in recent months on the impacts of the Virginia lease on the military, an environmentalist source believes the department will "stand up for the ability to conduct these exercises, partly because they don't have anywhere else to go."

In addition, a Florida senator who has long been an advocate of military training is opposing a key draft climate bill over the impact drilling would have on the military. Florida Sen. Bill Nelson (D) -- who has previously been critical of offshore drilling impacts on the military -- is opposing the long-awaited draft climate bill released earlier this month by Sens. John Kerry (D-MA) and Joseph Lieberman (I-CT), arguing its offshore drilling provisions would allow interference with military testing and training areas.

While Kerry has defended the bill's provisions letting states decide whether to establish a 75-mile no-drill zone, Nelson is fearful of giving states what he says is effectively "veto" power over military test and training activities in offshore areas picked for oil and gas exploration. And the environmentalist source argues Kerry's bill would require both a governor and state legislature to agree to ban drilling up to 75 miles off the coast, which this source says is an "unreasonably high" threshold.

Of particular concern to Nelson is the potential for drilling off Florida's Atlantic coast, and the impacts that would have on military and National Aeronautics & Space Administration facilities, such as a missile testing range, that are part of Cape Canaveral. "We must not give the Florida Legislature a veto over military and intelligence activities in the testing range and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station," Nelson said in a May 13 press release on the issue. "Such is unthinkable."

Nelson cited these concerns in a May 13 letter to Obama, Kerry and Lieberman, expressing an interest in discussing the issues with them soon. The missile testing range was selected after World War II, and has been used by DOD and NASA for the past six decades, he notes in the letter. "Other military facilities at nearby Port Canaveral support U.S. Navy ballistic missile ship and submarine operations," he adds.

Other lawmakers are also examining the impacts on the military of offshore drilling. A spokeswoman for the House Armed Services Committee says in a written response to questions that as part of the readiness subcommittee's examination of the interplay between energy sources and military readiness, the panel is looking at "offshore platforms to determine the impact on low-level training routes and to determine whether those impacts require modification of the routes that potentially could render the training less effective."

And the news on impacts to the military from Virginia drilling has prompted the office of Sen. Jim Webb (D-VA), a proponent of drilling off of Virginia's coast, to seek discussions with DOD on the impacts, according to a spokeswoman for his office.

OUTLYING LANDING FIELD – NC & VA



Norfolk Residents Gear Up To Fight Navy Airport Rental Idea

May 24, 2010

Patrick Terpstra

NORFOLK -- The Navy is looking for a place for some of its aircraft to practice flight operations.

In April, the Navy announced it wanted to rent an airfield in Virginia or northeastern North Carolina so about four-dozen E2 Hawkeye and C2 Greyhound airplanes could practice touch-and-go landings.

Navy officials say Naval Station Norfolk, NAS Oceana and Fentress Field are at capacity for fixed-wing training.

The turbo-prop planes are significantly less noisy than jets, the Navy stresses.

This week, the Norfolk Airport Authority will consider the idea. The Navy sent a letter to airport executive director Wayne Shank saying it was conducting market research of potential airfields, outlining operational requirements in case the airport is interested in soliciting a lease.

The City Council is scheduled to be briefed on Tuesday.

Some people living around the airport are against it. They say they're worried about the noise, their properties being devalued, the additional air traffic and the impact of the flights on Norfolk Botanical Garden.

The Navy says the airfield has to be within 90 nautical miles aircraft transit distance of Naval Station Norfolk.

Navy officials say it will use the airfield until an outlying landing field is built. Five sites in Virginia and North Carolina are under consideration, but no site has been selected.

Norfolk City Council is scheduled to be briefed on Tuesday and the Norfolk Airport Authority meets on May 27.

(WVEC-TV HAMPTON (VA) 24 MAY 10) Broadcast Clip

(RT 02:25) [View Clip](#)



Butterfield Seeks OLF Info

May 27, 2010

An amendment offered by U.S. Rep. G.K. Butterfield that would require the Navy to disclose all details about its efforts to build an outlying landing field in northeastern North Carolina was rejected without debate by a House committee, the congressman said Thursday.

Butterfield offered a four-page amendment to the fiscal year 2011 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that would have barred the Navy from spending any further funds toward the development of an outlying landing field (OLF) until the Navy provided Congress with detailed information about its needs and efforts.

“Given the potential impacts, I was trying ways to ensure a transparent process,” Butterfield said in a press release issued late Thursday afternoon. “People are understandably concerned because they don’t believe that all the facts are on the table.

This was an opportunity to help make sure all the facts and details were available for everyone before the Navy tries to move ahead.”

The Navy has narrowed its search to five potential OLF sites, three in Virginia and two in northeastern North Carolina. One is in northern Camden County at Hales Lake, and one in Gates County.

Butterfield, whose district includes Camden and Gates, said under the House Rules, the House Committee on Rules reviews proposed amendments before bills are sent to the House Floor for debate. He said the committee rejected the amendment without comment.

Meanwhile Thursday, the House began debate on the NDAA, which seeks to authorize about \$726 billion for defense budgets and provides defense-related policy and direction. Butterfield said the Navy has been seeking to develop an OLF since 2000. The Navy has said it needs an OLF to support training for aircraft stationed at Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana and Naval Station Norfolk, he said in the press release.

Last August, the Navy announced a delay in the release of a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) that examines those five sites. The Navy has made no indication of when it expects to release the EIS, Butterfield said.

Meanwhile, Butterfield said that although the amendment was not included in the House version of the legislation, he hopes it can be included in the Senate version, and as part of the final bill that goes before the president to be signed into law.

Comments:

Submitted by Matt Peeler on Fri, 05/28/2010 - 11:25.

is encouraging to see our Representative working this issue. Our Navy, even if not required by a statute, should be alarmed with this perception that they are NOT being open and transparent with the people to the point that a Congressional Representative would submit an amendment request to the armed services budget documentation a request to be open and transparent. It is alarming that a Congressional Representative is not getting the cooperation by the Navy on this project to the point that he has to make this kind of amendment request on a document that will become Law. If our Representative is not getting the answers he is looking for on our behalf, it does support the perception by many in the communities that the Secretary of the Navy is not being open with this process. That the Secretary of the Navy is being too tight-lipped with information and that the communities and local governments are not being kept informed well enough on this process that has the potential of impacting so many people and so much in the region.

The Secretary of the Navy (Navy) has some explaining to do. His office, which is ultimately in charge of this decision making process, has not been transparent with this process. The Navy has not engaged the rural local communities and rural local governments in a partnership within this process. The Navy's demonstrated desire is to usurp the recognized authority of the local government to control potential future encroachment by taking control of the lands outside the fence line of this facility. This authority belongs in the hands of, and is the responsibility of the local government to maintain.

The Navy has presented too many differing scenarios on this project that it appears like the Navy does not know what is required. The Navy has gone from not required to must have; from "the OLF is for only one type of aircraft" (2003 FEIS) to "it cannot be used for just one type, and all aircraft based at, and transit to NAS Oceana or NS Norfolk may be using the airfield"; from 24,000 - 30,000 acres of fee-simple Navy control of lands to 2,000 acres or possibly leasing all the lands; from the Fleet Response Plan being some conceptual idea to the driving force of this process.

The methodology of enforcement is suspect as well. When the airfield was NOT required, the Navy made an official determination to take control of 24,000 acres of land in Washington County, which would have grown to nearly 30,000 acres based on their desire to not split parcels of land when CONDEMNING properties under the Federal Governments eminent domain authority. Now that the Navy is claiming it is required, they only wish to condemn 2,000 acres and have hinted that they would even lease the lands for this facility, if an amiable solution could be found. If the local community is too populace, the Navy will not impose the full weight and authority of the Federal Government, but will continue to recognize the police authority of the local government and "let them deal with the encroachment concerns." However, if the community is small, the Navy has no problem with using, and potentially abusing the Federal powers entrusted to that office.

It is the policy of the Navy to recognize the police authority of the local governments and realizes that it is the responsibility of the local government to protect the various missions

performed by Sailors. If the mission performance is reliant on a partnership with the community, such as controlling encroachment, the Navy's policy is to work with the local government and advise the local government. The Navy's desire is to be in an informational role, vice "hands on" mode. The Navy also recognizes that it is not within the Navy's best interest to condemn lands simply to control future potential encroachment. For this project, the Navy has decided to condemn lands, usurp the authority of local governments, remove whole communities, take control of a major portion of authority from the local governments, get out of the information role all for what appears as a reaction to what happened to the Navy's facilities in the cities of Virginia Beach, Norfolk and Chesapeake. It is as if the Navy is fearful that the next local government will not protect the mission based on the actions of these local governments. Yet the Navy will not do any of those things around their existing facilities on the scale envisioned they shall do at the rural community for the same mission.

The Navy is in the habit of enforcing the various statutes biased towards the many. In North Carolina, the Navy has a decision to condemn and take control of 30,000 acres simply because there is so few people impacted. This decision was made in Sept, 2003. The Navy claimed they needed this to protect the mission of training our pilots to safely, effectively, and efficiently train our pilots how to land on a carrier. The Navy has NOT looked at the mission dynamics around NAS Oceana and NALF Fentress with this same thinking. It appears that only because North Carolina has so few people within the noise footprint is the Navy working on ensuring the mission is properly being performed. It appears that the Navy is using CDR Spock's line from the Star Trek movie, "the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or the one." In 2003, and even now, the Navy demonstrates what is required to properly and safely perform this mission at an air facility. Please review <http://www.olfeis.com/land.aspx> .

Notice the Zone 3 items and the wording. "All residences within Noise Zone 3 will be purchased and residents will be required to relocate." Is the Navy doing this around Oceana, Fentress, and NS Norfolk for these same planes and mission that is going to be done at this new OLF? They are NOT doing this for the mission. This would require the Navy to condemn and use eminent domain on roughly 33,000 people. While the Navy has no problem with usurping the authority of our local commissioners, the Navy does not have the desire to act in a uniform manner at all of the airfields for this process. This OLF is to augment Fentress. It is to add capacity and capabilities for the runways found at Oceana, Fentress and Norfolk. All these runways, which there are six existing, plus this OLF runway for a total of seven, must meet the same minimum standards for our pilots. Right now, none of the existing runways meet the enumerated standards the Navy is saying is required to properly and safely perform this mission. Before one person is removed from their lands for this mission in North Carolina, the Navy must demonstrate he is serious about making Oceana the future of naval aviation by removing every person around Oceana, Fentress and Chambers Field who fall into this category. If the Navy cannot, or will not do that uniformly, then the Navy cannot do that in North Carolina or upon a rural community in Virginia. If one person is removed from their lands for this mission, than any person that falls within this Core to 75 dB DNL contour line must be removed by the Navy.

The same can be said about the Navy's darkness and "train as we fight" requirements as stated in the Notice of Intent for this project. The Navy must make all the runways meet these same standards or the Navy is not making decisions uniformly for the mission of training our pilots to safely land aboard a carrier at night. The Navy cannot usurp the police authority of one local government while recognizing that same authority in another local government simply because it is cheaper to ignore the safety concerns found at the existing facilities.

The Navy has an obligation to protect the mission of his facilities, and if the local government cannot, or will not protect the mission, then the Navy must either take on those responsibilities that belong to the local government, or abandon the mission at that facility. The 2005 BRAC process concluded that the local government responsible for protecting the mission around Oceana cannot, and will not, take the required steps to protect the mission for our pilots. This same process concluded that the mission of training our pilots at Oceana should be abandoned because the facility cannot properly perform the mission due mainly because of encroachment outside the fence line. Even senior representatives of the Navy have stated the fidelity of training at Oceana and Fentress is terrible, this is not a place to train young pilots.

This obligation to protect the mission recognizes the police authority of our local governments. What the Navy is desiring to do at any of the 10 rural communities since 2000 should be aggressively being performed around Oceana, Norfolk, and Fentress now. It is not. The Navy is sending confusing information with this land acquisition strategy. The Navy has not properly explained why the local governments around Oceana, Norfolk and Fentress are allowed to, at the local governments convenience, encroach or fix the encroachment problems that are having a detrimental impact upon the mission for our pilots. The Navy has to explain why he feels it is acceptable to usurp the police authority of a local government that does not have an airfield in the community but is recognizing the police authority of a local government that has proven they cannot, or will not protect the mission of the airfield within their jurisdiction to the point that he has abandoned the full capabilities of the East Coast Master Jet Base. The Navy has effectively abandoned performing training operations at Oceana because of this encroachment. The full force of the Secretary of the Navy as well as the President and Congress should be imposed upon the local governments that have effectively caused the Navy to abandon training at Oceana.

The only thing the rural local governments have done is asked questions of the Navy. For that, the Navy is proposing to step in and take control of the responsibilities that properly belongs to the local government. To take control of lands through condemnation and restrictive use easements so the Navy is in direct control of what happens on the various properties around this single runway. Yet for local governments that have demonstrated an inability to protect the mission, the Navy establishes partnerships, and engages in joint land use studies (JLUS) that have no real power to do anything, but are "feel good" agreements that may be terminated at anytime. There is no obligation to follow through on anything in the Hampton Roads JLUS. The Navy will partner with, and recognize local government authority to the point of recognizing zoning boards and stating that they do not desire to be in every building decision around the airfield. This is being done around Oceana. The most the Navy will do is "voice their concern" about a project

around their existing runways. This double standard is not acceptable and the Navy should not be engaged, or even thinking of doing this to a community.

If the community around this OLF desired to put up a Lynnhaven Mall type complex in the same relative location, they could not do that. The Navy would own that land. The local government's zoning board would have no jurisdiction to even look into the possibility of building this. The Navy has effectively halted growth around this strip of asphalt. Yet when the Navy performed their presentations in 2009 at COA and near the Mason OLF site in Virginia, they put up a slide that showed the light encroachment generated by Lynnhaven Mall and stated that these lights are causing the darkness concerns for our pilots. Instead of fixing this problem by condemning Lynnhaven Mall, the Navy is looking to condemn lands in a rural community so this wont happen again. The Navy's philosophy is to ignore and fail to fix the existing problem around the master jet base, but impose restrictions so it never happens at this one runway. The Navy's goal appears to be to have only one runway that properly performs the mission for our pilots while turning a blind eye to the existing problems found at six other runways. Yet the Navy claims he needs two runways to provide the capacity needed to perform the mission under any condition.

If the Navy would fix the encroachment around Oceana and Fentress, he would have those two runways. The Navy would have Fentress and the parallel runway systems at Oceana. In 2003, the Navy stated that Oceana and Fentress have the capacity to meet the day to day flight operations requirements. During the BRAC process, the Navy stated they had a process in place that would get our pilots trained in the event of surge. The Navy surged seven carrier battle groups as demonstrated in Summer Pulse 2004 without this OLF. However the Navy did it then, he can continue to use that same blueprint. Both the 2003 NEPA process for the homebasing of the Super Hornet on the East Coast and the 2005 BRAC process did not require an additional OLF. If the Navy would have demonstrated a need for this OLF during the BRAC process, finding a location for this OLF would have been required as a stipulation for keeping the planes at Oceana. Apparently the Navy did not, or could not demonstrate a requirement for this OLF, even under the new FRP philosophy.

In 2003, the Navy stated he did not require an OLF to support Oceana. Since that time, the Navy has not demonstrated a need for this OLF. The Navy has demonstrated that the planes of Oceana should be relocated with the arguments he has used to try to convince these rural communities to allow the Navy to place this OLF in their community. When the Navy starts to treat all the communities and local governments as equals and imposes the land acquisitions strategies uniformly at all the facilities that are to perform this mission, the Navy would have the capacity, capabilities, flexibility and fidelity of training required to safely and properly train our pilots under any circumstance; and, as the EIS stated in 2003, no OLF would be required. The Navy needs to fix what they have already or abandon it. This OLF is not the solution to the Navy's problems.

Representative Butterfield's request for transparency on this OLF issue is a valid concern shared by many in the community. The Secretary of the Navy should desire to work with all the local governments and community in an open fashion and to explain why they have two very different philosophies on how they will recognize the various communities and local governments that this same mission impacts. The Navy should be requesting

from Congress the money required to fix the encroachment problems found around Oceana, Fentress, and Chambers Field along with the money he desires for this OLF. The Navy should explain why some people shall be moved from their property, and why the Navy shall take a leading role in curbing future potential encroachment around this OLF, but is not willing to remove the existing encroachment that is impacting the fidelity of training and jeopardizing the lives of both civilians and our pilots by not follow the order of the commander in chief in curbing and rolling back the encroachment found around Oceana.

Yes I know that what I speak of will result in either the Navy moving the planes from Oceana, or the condemnation of so many people from their homes around Oceana, Fentress, and Chambers Field. Yet the Navy brought up this problem with this OLF. The Navy has identified a serious safety and training concern with one of its facilities. This facility is responsible for training the bulk of the airwings for five of the eleven carrier battle groups our nation relies upon to keep us safe from those that would desire to do us harm. According to the Navy, there is about 110,000 people inside the high noise zones around Oceana and Fentress. These people, and the encroachment they represent are impacting the safe training of the pilots that are out there protecting us, as a nation of 300 million people. If the Navy is willing to condemn one person for a mission that helps train those pilots that are being utilized to protect the 300 million of us, shouldn't the Navy also be willing to condemn the 110,000 for that same mission? That is what the Navy is saying they he wishes to do, "the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or the one." Either condemn the few, or fully abandon the mission. However, the Navy cannot partially abandon a mission because it is "too difficult" to address. The Navy must do the right thing by addressing the encroachment issues. The Navy I served did not train me to look the other way or to take the easy way out of a problem. I was taught, and I taught my Sailors, to do what is proper even if it means doing what is extremely unpopular. Fixing or abandoning Oceana proper is probably one of the most unpopular decisions anyone has to make, but someone has to do it.

The Secretary of the Navy has that responsibility. How will he represent the core values our Sailors are taught?

Will he abandon Oceana as too costly to fix?

Will he use the full power of the Federal Government and ask Congress to fix Oceana proper as spelled out in the 2005 BRAC process and provide our pilots with a facility that meets their training needs?

Will he impose the full weight of the Federal Government only upon a rural community just because "that is the easier decision" while ignoring a major fidelity of training issue that is forcing this OLF decision?

Will he do nothing and just hope the problem goes away?

Thank you Representative Butterfield for continuing to work this issue. Please continue to press the Navy on our behalf and please request the reason why the Navy intends to treat the local governments of the several states differently for the same mission.

Matt Peeler

OVERSEAS—F-35 AUSTRALIA



Council to unveil jet noise policy

By Dennis Malone

Updated May 25, 2010

A new aircraft noise policy to go before Port Stephens Council tonight will give residents a better understanding of how the new Joint Strike Fighter jet will impact them.

The policy, which has been developed in conjunction with the Defence Department, outlines changes to noise contour maps when the new jets become operational.

Council officers have made a number of recommendations for mitigating noise for houses in affected areas, such as sound proofing.

Council sustainable planning manager David Broyd says recent concessions by the department on the use of the Salt Ash weapons range have also been included.

"The areas that have benefited from the reduced footprint of noise effect are Oyster Cove, Swan Bay, parts of Salt Ash and east Medowie. Areas that continue to be affected by aircraft noise include north-east Raymond Terrace, west Raymond Terrace, parts of Kings Hill, parts of Salt Ash and [the] eastern Fullerton Cove area," he said.

RAAF noise win prompts new policy

BY NICK HANSEN

26 May, 2010 10:35 AM

At a meeting on Tuesday night Port Stephens councillors endorsed a draft policy for dealing with development in noise-affected areas which embraced the RAAF changes.

They also agreed unanimously to seek compensation on behalf of land owners who have had their land devalued.

The council will also call on the government to pay for sound-proofing measures in existing homes.

Under the policy Mr Broyd said some development could be approved in noise-affected areas without reaching the Australian Standard, as long as a genuine attempt had been made to reduce noise.

The policy will be on exhibition for 28 days.

New noise maps released by the Department of Defence last week confirmed the deletion of hundreds of properties in Port Stephens from noise-affected zones, signalling an end to months of anguish for residents.

The new maps come after Defence agreed to halve the Joint Strike Fighter's expected use of the range, following its arrival in 2018.

That allowed Defence to shrink the noise forecast contours for the new jet, possibly leading to the lifting of development restrictions in the areas of Oyster Cove, Salt Ash and eastern parts of Medowie.



Jet noise concessions confuse residents

Posted May 27, 2010 10:11:00

A Port Stephens residents' group says the Defence Department's concessions on the use of the Salt Ash weapons range have created more confusion about which suburbs will be affected by aircraft noise.

The RAAF has agreed to reduce its use of the range by 50 per cent when the new Joint Strike Fighter jets enter service, minimising the impact on houses in Swan Bay, Medowie and Oyster Cove.

Medowie Progress Association spokesman Graham Rayner says a community meeting tonight will explain how new noise contour maps will affect residents, so residents can take their concerns to politicians.

"Those who want a lot more detail can come up to these guys that have got the hands-on experience and we can show them how the lines will affect them and just make more people aware of what's happened so far," he said.

"We're hoping they'll write letters to their local MPs to make them aware that they're concerned about it."

REAL ESTATE DISCLOSURE

fayobserver★com

NC to require home sellers to disclose nearby military bases

Published: 09:25 PM, Sun May 23, 2010

By John Ramsey
Staff writer

The state Real Estate Commission will begin requiring people selling a home in North Carolina to disclose whether their property is impacted by its proximity to a military base.

The move is meant to reduce or eliminate complaints from new homeowners about noise from artillery fire or low-flying aircraft, something real estate agents in the Cape Fear region jokingly call "the sounds of freedom."

David Evans, president of the Fayetteville Regional Association of Realtors, said the change is minor but positive.

"We're happy with it. We don't want anybody to not realize they're near one of the largest bases in the world," Evans said. "This is the state trying to address the fact that some people were surprised that Fort Bragg makes noise."

The change comes July 1 with a tweak in the fine print of a form required any time someone in North Carolina sells a home.

Required by law

The 21-question form asks property owners of any known issues with their home, though homeowners are allowed to check a "no representation" box to avoid answering any of the questions. Real estate agents, however, are required by law to inform potential buyers of any known issues that could affect the property.

One question asks about "commercial or industrial nuisances" such as noise, odor or smoke. On the new forms, "military" will be tacked on the list and the word "nuisances" will be gone altogether.

Miriam Baer, executive director of the state Real Estate Commission, said her agency began looking at military effects after a bill filed by state Sen. Tony Rand last year died in committee. The Fayetteville lawmaker's bill would have required anyone within a mile of a military installation to disclose that information to potential buyers.

Baer said the change seems to have support and most people "seem to be in accord that this is a step in the right direction."