

Joint Centers of Excellence for Chemical, Biological, and Medical RD & A

Category: Medical Activities

Mission: RD&A for Chemical & Biological Research

One Time Cost: \$73.9 million

Savings: 2006-2011 = \$45.9million

Return on Investment: 7 years

Annual Recurring Savings: \$9.2 million

Final Action: Remain Open

Secretary of Defense Recommendation

Realign Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Division, VA by relocating Non-medical Chemical Biological Defense Research and Development & Acquisition to Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD.

Secretary of Defense Justification

Creates Joint Centers of Excellence for Chemical Biological Defense research, development, and acquisition at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. Actions will increase synergy, focus on joint needs, and efficient use of equipment and facilities by co-locating Tri-Service and Defense activities performing functions in chemical-biological defense and medical RDA. Edgewood Chemical and Biological Center, Aberdeen Proving Ground, is home to the military's most robust infrastructure supporting research utilizing hazardous chemical agents.

Community Concerns

Relocating this capability to Aberdeen will require construction of new facilities and the predicted loss of team members and technical expertise would destroy a national capability at the very time it is most necessary. Specialized and environmentally approved facilities already exist at Dahlgren, with the newest technical facility slated to be operational in September 2005. It is estimated that approximately 20% of personnel would move. In addition, the over-water testing capability which is critical to the Navy and that now exists at Dahlgren can not be duplicated. The over-water testing and training range for chemical detection is the only one of its kind in the U.S. The Shipboard Chemical and Biological Defense Test Environment is unique and the specialized expertise in Navy ship systems is essential. Relocating this capability at a single site would create a major vulnerability as the Nation works to fight the GWOT. As a final note, the current Chemical/Biological Defense mission at Dahlgren has been joint since 1995 with all RDT&E procurement funds already going through JPEO-CBD. Relationships with other activities including Edgewood already exist at Dahlgren. To relocate this mission would not make the program any more joint.

Commission Findings

The Commission agreed with the Community that relocating the Chemical and Biological Defense mission from Dahlgren to Aberdeen, MD would not provide more jointness and synergy, but in fact would destroy the critical Navy testing and training capability. The Commission found that the Department of Defense over-valued the creation of a joint center of excellence for Chem-Bio RD&A. If this realignment was left as proposed by the Secretary it would actually diminish fleet readiness, and operational capabilities of the Navy.

Commission Recommendation

The Commission finds the Secretary of Defense deviated substantially from final criteria 1,3, and 4 and therefore recommends the following: Create a Joint Center of Excellence for Chemical/Biological Defense and make the Naval District Washington, West Area, Dahlgren Team a Joint Center detachment.