

Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission

EARLY



BIRD

October 19, 2005

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Time running out on efforts to derail base-closing plan

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

Sam Hananel

October 18, 2005

With a federal base-closing plan on track to become final next month, Missouri's senators say there's not much they can do to stop it.

The Pentagon's recommendation to close or downsize hundreds of U.S. military sites becomes law unless Congress passes a joint resolution of disapproval within 45 legislative days of receiving the report. That period ends around Nov. 8.

But there is little support in Congress for efforts to stop the Base Closure and Realignment Commission process, which would cost Missouri more than 2,000 defense jobs and close the 131st Air National Guard Fighter Wing at Lambert Field in St. Louis.

Earlier this month, the House Armed Services Committee soundly rejected a proposal by Rep. Ray LaHood, R-Ill., to block the plan, though any congressman can still force the full House to consider the resolution.

Both of Missouri's senators say they would vote against the base-closing plan, but neither plans to introduce such a measure in the Senate.

"Unfortunately, the lack of support in the House to derail BRAC makes action in the Senate a moot point," said Rob Ostrander, spokesman for Republican Sen. Kit Bond.

Sen. Jim Talent, also a Republican, sees little chance of success.

"It was clear it didn't have the votes to carry in either the House or the Senate," Talent spokesman Rich Chrismer said. "Senator Talent believes if you try something knowing you won't get many votes it tends to weaken your position."

Chrismer said Talent is working to make sure job training and other assistance is available to those workers losing jobs.

No other lawmaker in the Senate has introduced a joint resolution. A GOP-led effort in the Senate to derail the plan fizzled last month after the commission reviewing the plan spared several bases in the home states of lawmakers who opposed it.

There is also a pending court challenge to the plan to close the 131st Fighter Wing. A federal judge threw out the state's lawsuit last month, saying it was premature until Congress gave it final approval.

Once the plan becomes law, the court could issue a ruling on the merits. The state argues that the Pentagon is required to consult with governors before closing National Guard bases.

"We just continue to pursue our legal options," said Jim Gardner, a spokesman for Attorney General Jay Nixon.

Congress To Vote On BRAC Decision

Thursday

WHIOTV.com

October 19, 2005

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Hundreds of workers in the Miami Valley are hoping Congress can save their jobs.

It is all part of the Base Closure and Realignment Commission. President George W. Bush has already approved BRAC's recommendations.

That means that people working for the Defense Finance Accounting Service in Kettering and the Air National Guard Base in Springfield could lose their jobs.

Congress will vote on the recommendations on Thursday.

Local News Articles

Arlington prepares to deal with BRAC job losses

Washington Business Journal (Washington DC)

Joe Coombs

October 18, 2005

Arlington County's economic development commission is forming its own task force to address the fallout from a massive military realignment that will move 17,000 jobs out of the county.

Virginia Gov. Mark Warner has already appointed a panel, which includes Arlington County Board Chairman Jay Fisetto, to help the county cope with the job losses that will result from the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. That group is comprised mostly of politicians.

The Arlington economic development task force will include four members of the EDC and four members of the community "with expertise in areas relevant to BRAC issues," according to a release issued Tuesday morning.

"The BRAC transition task force will represent the voice of the Arlington business community," says Richard Litman, chairman of the Arlington Economic Development Commission.

The exact effects of the BRAC moves are still unclear, but Arlington knows 17,000 jobs will be lost and nearly 4 million square feet of office space will be vacated.

The economic development task force will examine BRAC's impact on the county's economy, tax base, real estate market and small businesses.

Army announces partnership to renovate housing at Fort Knox

The Associated Press State & Local Wire (Fort Knox, KY)
October 18, 2005

New family housing units will add to already drastic changes expected at Fort Knox.

The Army on Tuesday announced a proposed partnership with Actus Lend Lease for a program to build 1,850 new homes on the installation as part of its Residential Communities Initiative.

"Homes that will be built will be more like what you'll find in Elizabethtown rather than what you see on Fort Knox, where each looks exactly the same," said J.R. Cardin, director of the program at Fort Knox.

The homes - mostly three and four bedroom models - will feature walk-in closets, master bathrooms and garages or off-street parking.

The initiative is part of the Army's effort to update housing for soldiers, but remains separate from changes the Pentagon proposed during this year's base closure and realignment - or BRAC - process.

Units slated to come to Fort Knox because of the BRAC changes include the U.S. Army Accessions Command and U.S. Army Cadet Command from Fort Monroe, Va., and the Army Human Resources Command.

The Armor Center and School, which has long been the post's most high-profile command, is

expected to leave for Fort Benning in the next three years.

Charles Wilson III, director of resource and logistics for the Accessions Command, told the Radcliff-Hardin County Chamber of Commerce on Monday that communities should prepare for the influx of soldiers, civilians and families.

That economic impact will be overwhelming, Wilson said.

First Meeting Held for Virginia Beach Citizen BRAC Committee

WAVY-TV (Norfolk, VA)
October 19, 2005

As the city begins its fight to keep NAS Oceana, the Virginia Beach Citizen BRAC Committee met for the first time Monday evening.

The City Council appointed the 24 citizens on the committee to ensure all relevant information and factors are considered in the Virginia Beach's response to the BRAC requirements for keeping Naval Air Station Oceana as the East Coast master jet base.

The committee will also review and monitor the work of technical groups established to analyze the land use and economic impact of the realignment of NAS Oceana, examine legal options and issues, develop methods to keep the public informed and create a method for citizen input.

Tinton Falls delays vote on fort plan sought by Eatontown

Redevelopment of housing site
The Asbury Park Press (Asbury Park, NJ)
Keith Brown
October 19, 2005

TINTON FALLS — The Borough Council put off a vote on a resolution that would have endorsed Eatontown's plans to redevelop a military housing site on Fort Monmouth.

The council decided it did not have enough information to support the measure, which was requested by Eatontown in its bid to prod the Army into accepting its 2003 redevelopment plan for the 486-unit Howard Commons housing site on Pine Brook Road.

"I don't think we really want to even give the impression that we're parceling off parts of the fort before we really know what we're going to be able to do with it," said Councilman Brendan Tobin. "Besides, we only just got the plan today."

The rest of the five-member panel agreed. The matter was scheduled for its Nov. 1 meeting.

The resolution mirrored one passed by Eatontown Sept. 28 that authorized Eatontown Mayor Gerald J. Tarantolo and Business Administrator Mike Trotta to "pursue all avenues available" to enlist the support of area congressmen, Democrats Rush D. Holt and Frank J. Pallone Jr., in swaying the Army to support the borough's plan to redevelop the Howard Commons site.

In 1999, the Army declared the Howard Commons area — once heavily used by the Army and by Earle Naval Weapons Station — as surplus housing. It was the first step in opening the property for private development under a federal program called the Residential Community Initiative.

Eatontown commissioned a \$50,000 study of the area, which became the basis of a redevelopment plan eventually adopted by the Borough Council in 2003. It calls for demolishing some of the existing housing, expanding other lots and constructing a commercial center on Hope Road. It would include low-income housing and age-restricted units.

But then, in May, the Pentagon recommended that the fort be closed and all work on private development of Howard Commons halted. The federal Base Realignment and Closure commission in September upheld the recommendation.

The fort's fate now rests with Congress, which could vote on whether to overturn the BRAC recommendations as early as next week.

Jim Papa, Holt's chief of staff, has said that the congressman has not yet met with the Army. Pallone has said he is concerned that Tarantolo's proposal was only one piece of the Fort Monmouth puzzle and seeks further discussion among all involved before he would support the mayor's position.

Opinions/ Editorials

N/A

Additional Notes

N/A