

Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Military Installations

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VAN DE PUTTE ISSUES STATEMENT ON BRAC

Today, Friday, May 13, 2005, the Department of Defense released its recommendations to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission on U.S. military bases to be closed or realigned. Several Texas installations have been designated for closure, including Red River Army Depot, Lone Star Ammunition Plant, Brooks City Base, and Naval Station Ingleside, in addition to several smaller military installations. Other Texas bases have been designated for realignment, with Lackland Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, and Sheppard Air Force Base losing a significant number of personnel. Fort Bliss and Fort Sam Houston will both gain approximately 10,000 new personnel from this latest BRAC round.

Senator Leticia Van de Putte, District 26, San Antonio, Chair of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Military Installations, commended Texas military installations and the communities surrounding them for their foresight in preparing for this year's BRAC round.

After past closures and realignments, Texas' military communities learned an important lesson: with regard to BRAC, all Texans must work together to preserve and protect our military bases, each of which is a crucial part of the surrounding community's economic prosperity and quality of life. Military installations are a major component of the personality of a community, as demonstrated by Senator Van de Putte's hometown of San Antonio, known as "Military City, USA."

For the past several years, Texas communities have come together to ensure that each area does everything possible for its military installation. Cities and towns have worked tirelessly to increase their "military value," the primary BRAC evaluation criterion, by using state financing tools to improve roads, airfields, ports, and other infrastructure; using state financing and other methods to perform economic development projects to increase the military value of the community; evaluating local projects to ensure that they do not interfere with military training operations; increasing the ease with which military spouses can find employment and military children can enroll in school; offering military bases a discount on electricity; helping military service members who are also fire fighters, police officers, teachers, and other public servants; and increasing and fine-tuning benefits for veterans.

Senator Van de Putte states, "Texas communities' efforts have improved the operating climate for Texas military installations, enhanced the quality of life of our military service members and dependents, and fostered important partnerships between communities and their military bases. They have prepared for this BRAC round as thoroughly as possible, and for that I applaud their efforts. Today, I am proud to be a Texan."