

Minutes of the October 7, 2015, Meeting of the
NCMAC Legislative Affairs Committee (via teleconference)

Attendees

Sen. Harry Brown, Committee Chairman

Sally-Ann Gupta

Rep. George Cleveland

Secretary Cornell Wilson

Paul Dordal, MAC Vice Chairman

Bobby Lumsden

Chuck Allen, Mayor of Goldsboro

Sgt. Maj. William Hatcher, USMC Retired

Committee Chairman Harry Brown called the meeting to order and gave introductory remarks acknowledging areas needing improvement and future goals for the short session.

Chairman Brown discussed military-related bills that have been passed or presented during the long session of the General Assembly.

WHAT PASSED:

- S43 and H319 – CDL's for Veterans Revisions – extends application period from 90 days to one year during which a qualified veteran is exempt from certain skills tests.
- \$1 million went into the Modified Farmland Preservation Trust Fund for buffers for bases and \$1 million in grant money for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund was included in the budget
- \$200,000 to restore aid to County veterans' services was included in the budget; each county applies individually with remaining funds being distributed equally at the end of the year
- DOD Certified Child Care/State Subsidy – this was included in the budget
- In-state tuition for certain veterans for Community college and University system
- \$1.675 million for BRAC purposes - \$200,000 of this is for local governments, nonprofits, or other support groups that have projects that will add military value, add capacity, or resolve safety

concerns for military installations in order to protect current missions or increase likelihood of new missions in North Carolina

- Creation of Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

- Bond package - \$70 million for National Guard Readiness Centers included; \$300 million in grants available for water and sewer infrastructure in communities (esp. saltwater intrusion); get applications in.

WHAT DID NOT PASS:

- Veterans Employed Annual Report – passed Senate and got to the House where it was diluted; the bill was pulled until the short session.
- Bond proposal military projects got tied up due to misunderstanding as it relates to the tax aspect of bond package and cost with projects included; there was not a clear understanding by members of GA. Bond proposal cannot be changed, at this point.
- FRC lift fan facility was omitted – Tinker AFB is vying for this facility.

Chairman Brown suggests compiling a list of what other states are doing with regard to protecting their bases and spending, in an effort to educate the General Assembly relative to projects on federal installations and how state-match funding works in those other states.

Secretary Wilson commented that NCMAC Chairman Martin put forth a similar effort in preparing a letter that was circulated to General Assembly members, which we cannot confirm was read or understood. A follow up meeting to brief key leadership with Senator Berger and Rep. Moore is recommended to ensure they have a full understanding and can pass along to other GA members the intent of the bond package.

Chairman Brown recommends a shorter format, bullet-point style memorandum.

MAC Vice Chairman Dordal emphasized that the economic impact information should be included, e.g., retaining missions that provide value to our state.

Wind Farm

Chairman Brown expressed concerns about the wind farm project, especially as it relates to Seymour Johnson AFB.

Secretary Wilson spoke to a Virginia counterpart to learn how they overcame ROTHM concerns. Based on information the Secretary received, there should not be an impact to Seymour Johnson ranges and training routes.

Chairman Brown found problematic the wind permit being changed after the fact, obviating the grandfather clause, and expanding the original permit parameters.

NEW BUSINESS:

Maj. Lumsden mentioned that a need has arisen that may need legislative remedy in the short session in establishing a crisis stabilization unit for youth in behavioral health crisis. We will be meeting with DHHS today, to determine if funding is available.

Per Secretary Wilson, the strategic plan public report has been made available and we are expecting feedback and input from communities and installations. The full report is made available for in-person inspection at the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Following an opportunity for additional questions and comments, Chairman Brown adjourned the meeting at 10:30