



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

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GOVERNOR SUPPORTS NEW MEXICO BASES WITH LEGISLATIVE AND CAPITAL OUTLAY PACKAGE

Package includes tax relief, education projects, and infrastructure

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson today outlined a package of legislation and capital outlay projects designed to support New Mexico's four military installations.

"During my campaign for Governor, I promised the communities of Alamogordo, Albuquerque, Clovis and Las Cruces that I would work tirelessly to help them protect New Mexico's military bases from the next round of closures in 2005," Governor Richardson said.

"I have done just that. My Administration - working with the Legislature - has developed an economic package for those communities that demonstrate, in a concrete way, the support that New Mexico has for its military bases."

Governor Richardson and Lt. Governor Diane Denish are working with state Senator Richard Romero and state Representatives Kiki Saavedra and Jose Campos, who are sponsoring the base-closure legislation.

A recent study by New Mexico State University shows that the four military installations - Kirtland AFB, Cannon AFB, Holloman AFB and White Sands Missile Range - bring in \$2.2 billion per year - or one in every \$20 spent in the state. Direct employment on the

bases and in support industries is approximately 38,000, or one in every 14 jobs in the state.

The legislation includes a compensating tax deduction for articles brought to New Mexico for research, development, testing and evaluation, as well as \$400,000 to support the Office of Military Base Planning and Support and the Military Base Planning Commission. The bill also moves the Office of Military Base Planning into the Governor's Office, under Homeland Security Advisor Brigadier General Sobel. Half of the \$400,000 will be used to evaluate each military facility against criteria published by the Department of Defense for the next round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) hearings.

“As a member of the Military Base Planning Commission, I am well aware that we need to be prepared for the next round of BRAC hearings, which will be more extensive than the previous rounds,” Senator Romero said. “We need a rigorous, independent assessment of where we stand.”

The U.S. Department of Defense has announced that it plans to cut as much as 25% of the existing base capacity in the next round, which begins in May 2005.

Capital Outlay projects announced today in support of the bases include \$300,000 each to upgrade the overpasses and entrances to Cannon AFB and Holloman AFB. Another project, the resurfacing of Hwy 60/84 from Cannon AFB, is already underway. In addition, the Administration has underway over \$30 million of capital improvements in base-area schools.

Lieutenant Governor Diane Denish, who chairs the Military Base Planning Commission and was instrumental in developing the package announced today, explained that quality of life issues, including education, will have a significant impact in the next BRAC round.

“We have an excellent story to tell on education,” she said. “New Mexico was the only state last year to raise teachers salaries and the constitutional amendments proposed by the Governor and passed last fall will pump into our schools \$600 Million during the next 12 years. These capital outlay projects supplement those efforts at the base schools.”