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## **Governor Richardson and United States Air Force Agree to Expand the Melrose Air Force Range**

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson and United States Air Force Assistant Secretary William C. Anderson agreed during a meeting this week to move forward with the expansion of Cannon Air Force Base. The proposed expansion is the result of a \$5 million investment the Governor made for Cannon following the 2006 military base-closure process that threatened to shutter the Eastern New Mexico base.

“We are fulfilling a promise I made to modernize Cannon Air Force Base and increase its military value to the Air Force,” Governor Bill Richardson said. “The expansion of the Melrose Air Force Range will help Cannon during future base-closure efforts,” said Governor Richardson. “New Mexico is committed to being a strong partner with the Air Force to ensure a strong future of our bases.”

The State of New Mexico, the Air Force and the State Land Office are in agreement to move ahead and spend the next 30 days to examine the process.

Department of Finance Secretary Katherine Miller signed a Memo of Understanding with Air Force Assistant Secretary William Anderson setting the framework to transfer land from the State Land Office to the United States Air Force to expand the Melrose Range.

“The agreement between the Department of Finance and the U.S. Air Force will ensure the protection of agricultural leases on state trust land managed by the state Land Office,” said Secretary Miller. “We will work diligently with the Office of Military Base Planning and Support to identify potential land that meets Air Force requirements.”

Governor Richardson worked with the Legislature in 2007 to secure \$5 million towards land for Cannon’s expansion and to support new missions.

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