

Information Sheet
House Bill 713

The BRAC process (Base Realignment And Closure) is fairly straightforward. The impact that it could potentially have on Montana is with Malmstrom Air force Base, Montana Air National Guard, and the Army National Guard. All of these units could be potentially earmarked for closure. The economic impact of all of these units is over three hundred million dollars annually to the economy of Montana. The process is very straightforward and broken down into two sections with dates applied to it.

Section 1: Defensive

March 15th was the deadline for the President to give names of the nine candidates to serve on the Independent Closure Commission. When this commission is formed, May 16th is the deadline for the Pentagon to give to the commission the list of bases to be closed. What differs in this BRAC round, under revised rules the commission may alter Pentagon recommendations only if it finds that the defense department officials deviated in some way from the criteria laid out in law which lists military needs first, followed by potential savings to the military, economic impact on the community, supporting infrastructure, and environmental considerations. It is very difficult to get your name off of the list this time above any other in the past. If any of our bases are on the list, we must instantly try to find fault in the Pentagon's decision by hiring competent contractors who understand the process and can help us so that we can provide information to the BRAC committee that would be different than what the Pentagon is providing. We have until September 8th to get that work done. Then the Base commission's report goes to the President and that is his date to accept or reject. If he rejects it, the commission must resubmit another by October 20th, the date line for the commission to submit recommendations. November 7th is the date for President Bush to accept the recommendations again. If he rejects, our understanding is that the process ends. However, it is highly improbable that he will do that due the fact that he has supported all of this process.

Section 2: Offensive

If we are not on the BRAC base closure list for any of our bases, then we enter into the offensive. There will be a lot of missions on the table. Obviously if they close 25%-30% of their bases, the missions that were in those bases will go to other bases that are not fully utilized. We have bases in Montana that are not fully utilized. We will again go on the offensive, hire the necessary contractors who have credibility with the BRAC commission and the Pentagon, and aggressively go after those missions, for not only Great Falls but for other areas of this state like Glasgow, Helena, and others.

This is big business. It is hundreds of millions of dollars a year in impact to the state of Montana. In the last BRAC process, Montana lost. What differs this time as well is the guard units are on the table. We have to be responsive. Complacency will cause us to lose. We have the support of the delegation and State Wide Business's but having the State involved is equally important.