

Bill Would Halt Permits For New Wind Energy Facilities to Protect N.C. Military Installations

By Administrator

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A bill filed in the N.C. Senate on Tuesday would continue efforts to protect the state's military installations – and the hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians employed in jobs supporting the military – by ensuring their operations, training capabilities, and readiness are not inadvertently compromised by new wind turbines. The bill would pause permits for new wind facilities while the study is conducted, a prudent step to ensure there are no conflicts with existing installations before additional projects are developed. The Military Operations Protection Act of 2017 ([LINK](#)) – sponsored by Sens. Harry Brown (R-Onslow), Louis Pate (R-Wayne) and Norman Sanderson (R-Pamlico) – calls for an independent, data-driven study of the extent and scope of the state's military operations, as well as the impact that building large new wind turbines could have on them.

North Carolina, which is home to six major Department of Defense (DOD) installations, has the third largest military population in the entire nation. The military sector is the state's second largest industry – benefitting 79 of 100 counties, supporting more than 575,000 jobs, and contributing \$34 billion in personal income and \$66 billion in gross state product.

For years, lawmakers have heard concerns that military flight routes could be compromised by tall structures – including wind turbines – which could endanger paratroopers and pilots and interfere with aircraft radar systems, training routes and patterns. North Carolina's military installations are heavily dependent on air missions, and failing to act could harm their viability and standing as they are considered in future Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission discussions.

“Our military installations have been the cornerstones of our communities for generations, and they provide jobs to countless North Carolinians who are proud and privileged to support them,” said Brown. “It’s unfortunate that taxpayer-subsidized incentives to the renewable energy industry are resulting in higher energy costs to N.C. consumers, but at the end of the day, this bill isn’t about the merits or lack thereof in subsidizing wind energy. It is about our responsibility to protect the investment the U.S. military has made in our state and honor our commitment to being the most military-friendly state in the country.”

North Carolina provides generous taxpayer-subsidized incentives to the renewable energy industry, and the state is home to roughly 60 percent of all qualifying wind and solar energy facilities in the entire nation.