

## Senator Proposes Compromise For Wind Farms Near Military Training Areas

By Administrator

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Senator Harry Brown (R-Onslow) today introduced compromise legislation, Senate Bill 377, based on the joint AECOM-N.C. Commerce Department study of the risks associated with wind mills in zones used by the Department of Defense for training exercises. The study produced a statewide map identifying areas in which tall structures pose a “high risk [of] degrading safety and the military’s ability to perform aviation training.” In a joint statement, Major General Robert Dickerson (RET) and Lieutenant General Gary McKissock (RET) said, “The comprehensive mapping effort, if used as a template, should provide the state compatible growth around military installations that doesn’t interfere with ranges and military installation missions. This proposal brings clarity to an issue that may possibly weigh against North Carolina’s military installations in future BRAC evaluations.”

Major General Dickerson served as Base Commanding General of Camp Lejeune. Lieutenant General McKissock served as Commanding General of Marine Corps Logistics Bases and Commanding General Marine Corps Material Command.

In 2017, the General Assembly enacted an 18-month moratorium on wind energy projects to allow time to better understand the risks such projects pose to military personnel and equipment during training exercises. AECOM, a multinational engineering firm, conducted a study together with the N.C. Department of Commerce to determine if and to what extent wind mills posed risks. Military installations across the state provided AECOM and the Commerce Department data on training routes and operations. That coordinated effort produced a map detailing zones of high risk, medium risk, and low risk posed to military operations by tall structures.

Senator Brown’s legislation prohibits wind mills in only the map’s high risk zones.

“First of all, we shouldn’t take any action that jeopardizes the United States military’s ability to safely train the brave men and women who serve our country,” Senator Brown said. “Beyond that, though, the military is the lifeblood of eastern North Carolina’s economy. It supports hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in economic activity. Constructing obstacles that degrade the military’s ability to conduct training exercises puts our military bases at risk of closure during the next BRAC proceeding.”

According to the North Carolina Military Business Center, the Department of Defense is the second-largest sector of the state’s economy, accounting for 12 percent of Gross Domestic Product. The N.C. Department of Commerce reported in 2015 that the military supported 10 percent of North Carolina’s total employment.

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Senator Brown added, “This evidence-based legislation is a fair and reasonable middle ground that allows for responsible wind energy development while ensuring the United States military can continue operating safely in North Carolina.”