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## **Lawmakers Praise Pentagon Plans to Release BRAC Guidelines**

On Thursday, March 25, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and Environment Raymond DuBois today indicated that the BRAC 2005 selection subcriteria and related documentation will be made public.

Today, New England lawmakers praised the Pentagon for plans to release BRAC guidelines.

"Past BRAC rounds didn't even begin to assess the value of high-tech bases like Hanscom and Natick accurately. Releasing these more specific criteria will tell us whether the Pentagon is fairly evaluating our bases," said Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA). "These two unique bases provide indispensable contributions to our national defense. With the accurate criteria, they'll convince the Pentagon that they're too important to shut down."

U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) stated, "It is important as the 2005 BRAC moves forward that everyone involved in the process understand the guidelines the Pentagon will use to evaluate each military installation. The recent announcement that the subcriteria will be made public is welcome news. The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is an invaluable part of our nation's overall homeland security effort, and as the BRAC process continues, we are ready to make a strong case for the viability of the Shipyard. We also look forward to demonstrating the important role Hanscom Air Force Base plays in our national defense as the process continues."

"Having BRAC subcriteria available to members of the New England Congressional Delegation and residents and business owners of the communities served by facilities such as the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and Hanscom Air Force Base is an important step toward understanding how these military facilities and others across the country will be evaluated in the upcoming BRAC round," said Senator John Sununu (R-NH). "My colleagues and I remain steadfast in our commitment of ensuring that Pentagon officials and yet-to-be named BRAC members fully understand the integral role that Portsmouth and Hanscom play in our nation's military readiness."

Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney stated, "I am happy to hear that the Department of Defense intends to release the subcriteria. I applaud the Pentagon's openness and urge that the subcriteria reflect the immense value that comes from proximity to the high-tech and academic clusters in which Massachusetts is a world leader."

Representative Ed Markey (D-MA) stated, "Natick Soldiers Systems Center and Hanscom Air Force Base are integral parts of the economy of Metrowest and all of Eastern Massachusetts. Support from the Statehouse to defend these bases which protect our troops everyday is

heartening and I hope it will be matched fully by the communities and companies that also rely on Natick and Hanscom."

"I'm pleased that the DOD has finally come around to our position that releasing the implementing guidances, or subcriteria, is the only way to ensure full transparency of the BRAC process," Representative Marty Meehan (D-MA) said. "I am hopeful that these subcriteria depart from previous rounds and adequately assess the unique values of research labs and technical facilities like Hanscom Air Force Base and Natick Labs. Making public the subcriteria will reassure the American people that the DOD's criteria truly reflect its stated goals of jointness and transformation."

DuBois' statements come after receiving letters requesting the release of the subcriteria organized by Senator Kennedy and signed by Governor Romney, Senators Gregg , Sununu and Kerry and Congressmen Markey, Frank, Meehan, Bass, McGovern, Tierney, Capuano, and Bradley. In addition, DuBois had indicated that he would consider the request at a February 5, 2004 meeting with the Massachusetts delegation.

DuBois was asked about the issue at a hearing by the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness. Rep. Solomon Ortiz of Texas, the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee, stressed the importance of releasing the new criteria as a matter of fairness, so that communities will have the same information being used by DOD to evaluate the installations.

The subcriteria will serve as the principal guidance on base evaluation for different joint cross service groups set up to carry out the process. "Once that guidance is formulated and given, it is releasable," DuBois said, adding that the same holds true for documents associated with the guidance.

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