



Snohomish County
County Executive's Office

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Reardon lauds federal lawmakers for including ‘quality of life’ in base-closure measure

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Snohomish County Executive praises U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen for amendment recognizing social, economic and community needs of military personnel

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon today praised Congressional action that would give “quality of life” issues greater consideration when a federal commission determines which of the nation’s military bases should be closed.

The decision to make social, economic and community needs of military personnel part of the 2005 federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission’s criteria was pushed by U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen, D-Arlington. It has the broad backing of local and state elected officials, including Reardon, Everett Mayor Ray Stephanson and Gov. Gary Locke.

“Quality of life issues are very important for our local military personnel,” Reardon said. “They affect morale, recruitment, retention and family security. There’s a reason that Naval Station Everett is known as ‘The Sailor’s Choice.’ It is because Snohomish County, our communities and our schools are sensitive to the needs of military men and women and their families.

“When I was in Washington D.C. in February, Rep. Larsen and I agreed that ‘quality of life’ needed to be part of the federal commission’s criteria. We emphasized the relationship between our Snohomish County communities and our military families at every meeting - from Capitol Hill to the Pentagon. Rick’s success today is a very positive development for Naval Station Everett as we prepare for the 2005 round of base closure commission deliberations.”

The new “quality of life” language was approved today by the Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. The amendment was included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005. A full Armed Services Committee vote is expected within the week.

Snohomish County hosts more than 85 percent of the Navy families assigned to Naval Station Everett and facilities such as the Jim Creek Radio Station. More than 5,600 service men and women are assigned to Naval Station Everett, making the base Snohomish County's second largest employer after The Boeing Company.

In a Jan. 23 letter to Peter Potochney, Director of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, Reardon and Everett Mayor Stephanson asked that BRAC specifically link morale, retention and recruitment to a community's infrastructure and its quality of life.

Reardon and Stephanson wrote, "We believe that a stable family life in a supportive community positively affects the morale and well being of the military personnel, dependents, and civilian employees of any installation. Good schools; ample recreation and entertainment opportunities; low cost quality housing; safe, secure streets; and an efficient transportation network are just a few aspects of a quality of life.

"Recruitment and retention of military personnel is a significant issue for today's military and is obviously a mission-essential factor.

Reardon and Stephanson concluded, "In the final analysis, the issue is not how many bases do we have and how well do they function. Rather, it is how many soldiers and sailors do we have and how well do they function. Local infrastructure and the quality of the surroundings is a major factor in support of our bases and troops."

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