

Price, Butterfield Worked to Include the Prohibition in the Bill

**Washington, D.C.** - A key House committee today approved a bill that would block funding for the Navy's plan to locate an Outlying Landing Field (OLF) in Washington County, NC.

The site has raised objections from the surrounding communities, environmentalists, sportsmen, and numerous state and local leaders.

Reps. David Price (NC-04) and G.K. Butterfield (NC-01) worked with their colleagues on the Military Construction Appropriations Subcommittee to strip the funding. Price is a member of the full Appropriations Committee and a former member of the military construction subcommittee. The bill, which passed the full committee with unanimous support today, is slated to move to the House floor within two weeks.

The funding prohibition follows House approval of a Defense Bill that would de-authorize the OLF project in Washington County. That bill is now working its way through the Senate.

"Today's action will allow us to cover all our bases as these two bills that impact the OLF move forward in Congress," Price said. "This should leave no room for doubt that we are serious about blocking any plans to locate a landing field next to the Pocosin National Wildlife Refuge."

"This is another clear, strong and simple message from Congress to the Navy about the need to choose a suitable location," Butterfield said. "Now it's time for the state and Navy work together and move forward."

The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill allocates \$64.7 billion in funding for the military's construction needs and for military and veterans' health care. The bill prohibits the Navy from pursuing "any activity related to the construction of an Outlying Landing Field in Washington County, North Carolina."

In the report accompanying the bill, the committee expressly disavows the Navy's selection of Site C in Washington County. The report also acknowledges the ongoing discussions between the Navy and the State of North Carolina to broker a mutually acceptable site for the landing field, and it pledges the committee's intent "to closely monitor the Navy's progress in considering alternative locations in North Carolina, and expects the Navy to fully and fairly consider pilot safety, negative environmental impacts, and potential disruptive effects on surrounding communities in its consideration of such sites." The report also requires the Navy to deliver a progress report to Congress on its efforts to find an alternative site by July 31, 2007.

Price and Butterfield also hailed the bill for fulfilling our nation's obligation to its servicemen and women, their families and our veterans. It provides the largest increase in funding for veterans health care in the VA's 77-year history, adding over 1,000 new claims processors to reduce the backlog of 400,000 benefits claims. It also increases funding to address the VA's repair and maintenance needs to prevent a Walter Reed type scandal from occurring in the VA system.

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Bill to Block Funds for OLF in Washington Co. Moves to House Floor