

A written copy of testimony to given the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Prepared by COL Scot T. Olson

My name is Colonel Scot T. Olson. I am the Director of Construction Facilities Management for the Utah National Guard. I am responsible for the installation and facilities management as well as real property master planning for the Utah National Guard. I wish to thank the Committee for the opportunity to discuss H.R. 3651: *The Utah National Guard Readiness Act*.

Camp W.G. Williams was set aside in 1912 as military training site for the Utah National Guard. A majority of the facilities and supporting infra structure were designed around the forces that existed between the 1950's and 1970's. The Utah National Guard has increased greatly in troop strength, types of units, and mission requirements. We are constantly struggling to improve, upgrade, or expand our facilities at Camp Williams to meet national requirements to train and deploy troops ready to meet the technological and tactical conditions wherever they may be called to serve.

The garrison area of Camp Williams can no longer sustain or support growth beyond the current accepted master plan. The existing limitations in the utilities, available land, topography, and access restrict our ability to adequately address planned increases in force structure. We must now make plans for expanding troop support facilities beyond the current master plan for the Camp Williams garrison area. New facilities for Camp Williams will appear on the Future Years Development Plan FY13 and FY14.

The site, already located within the boundaries of Camp Williams and withdrawn from the Bureau of Land Management for military purposes, is adjacent to the garrison area. It has great access to the highway, all the major utilities and communications lines are already readily available, the land has had recent environmental reviews, and the topography is well suited for construction. The transfer in ownership of this land to the Utah State Armory Board greatly reduces both the time and the state's cost of initiating new construction.

Camp Williams is situated in a unique location. It is surrounded on three sides by urban development. Its diverse habitat provides for varied wildlife and plant species. Our overarching goal is to provide challenging, relevant, meaningful military training while preserving our lands in an environmentally sound manner. We must preserve these ranges for future military while protecting the environment from unintended over use and damage. We have been very successful in these goals. However, we must consolidate all new facilities construction to areas that will have the least environmental impact. There are currently several structures already existing on areas of the proposed land transfer site. This is significant in that we are not greatly changing the use of the land or creating undue environmental changes. In fact, it is our opinion that by incorporating these parcels into a greater master plan we can execute greater land stewardship and continue to exercise sound environmental practices.

Failure to transfer the lands as identified in H.R. 3651 will have several significant negative impacts. The time is now to incorporate these lands into a comprehensive master plan. We would gain greater efficiency in planning and negate the costs associated with a piecemeal approach. If the Utah State Armory Board has title to these lands then they are considered an available asset and thereby eliminate all costs

involved in land acquisition (licenses, agreements, and duplicative requirements to meet federal and state requirements).

Thank you for allowing me to appear and testify in support of this important legislation. I stand ready to answer any questions the Members of the Committee may have.