

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR COGHILL

Introduced: 2/11/15

Referred: State Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the United States Department of the Army to maintain the current level of its**
2 **combat-capable structure in the state and apply the No Action Alternative provision to**
3 **both Fort Wainwright and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.**

4 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 **WHEREAS** the Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Army
6 2020 Force Structure Realignment under which the United States Department of the Army is
7 preparing for a 2020 force structure realignment contains a No Action Alternative provision
8 that is appropriate for both Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks and Joint Base Elmendorf-
9 Richardson in Anchorage; and

10 **WHEREAS** Headquarters, United States Department of the Army, is continuing to
11 reduce the maximum number of active duty personnel from a wartime peak of 570,000
12 personnel to 450,000 personnel by the end of the United States government's fiscal year 2017;
13 and

14 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of the Army must reduce and
15 reorganize the structure of its combat-capable forces to achieve the fiscal reductions

1 required by P.L. 112-25 (Budget Control Act of 2011), as amended; and

2 **WHEREAS** the reduction and reorganization must be consistent with the national
3 military strategy issued by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and

4 **WHEREAS** the United States Army will be conducting listening sessions at 30
5 military installations across the United States that are being evaluated for potential personnel
6 reductions; and

7 **WHEREAS** the primary purpose of the listening sessions is to provide members of an
8 affected community with an opportunity to comment on the reductions under consideration in
9 their community; and

10 **WHEREAS** Anchorage could lose up to 5,300 military and civilian positions at Joint
11 Base Elmendorf-Richardson; and

12 **WHEREAS** Fort Wainwright could lose up to 5,800 military and civilian positions;
13 and

14 **WHEREAS** the nation's primary concern must always be national defense and the
15 security of the United States, including Alaska; and

16 **WHEREAS** the geographic location of Alaska, including its access to polar air routes,
17 provides a vital strategic advantage for current and future Department of the Army missions,
18 force mobilizations, offensive operations, and defensive operations; and

19 **WHEREAS** Alaska's strategic global position has been recognized since World War
20 II as providing a prime location to defend the United States against the potential aggression of
21 hostile nations, including Russia and North Korea; and

22 **WHEREAS**, from bases in the state, United States Army combat forces can rapidly
23 deploy by air or sea to areas in and around the Pacific and Europe and can cross the Arctic to
24 Europe faster than by flying from the East Coast of the United States; and

25 **WHEREAS** the six major military installations, more than 23,000 active duty service
26 members, and more than 37,000 family members of active duty service members in Alaska
27 make the military presence in the state economically important to Alaska; and

28 **WHEREAS** the military programs of the University of Alaska Anchorage support
29 military personnel and their families throughout the area served by the University of Alaska
30 Anchorage, including by providing extension centers on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
31 that offer educational opportunities to about 1,000 military and civilian students with classes

1 designed so that students can fit coursework into their busy schedules using conventional
2 educational environments and electronic and other distance delivery systems; and

3 **WHEREAS** the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex consists of 63,000 square miles
4 of training areas and provides a training and readiness complex that is unique in the world;
5 and

6 **WHEREAS** Red Flag Alaska, a series of Pacific Air Forces commander-directed field
7 training exercises, hosts allied nations from around the world in the unrestricted air space
8 needed for the exercises that is found in Alaska, but that is quickly becoming a premium in
9 the United States; and

10 **WHEREAS** the proximity of United States Air Force and Alaska Air National Guard
11 units to Fort Wainwright and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson provides joint training
12 opportunities for the United States Army units stationed in Alaska and outside Alaska; and

13 **WHEREAS** the United States Army and the United States Air Force are located
14 together at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, providing a unique and efficient deployment
15 base for the two military forces; and

16 **WHEREAS** Alaska has demonstrated its strong commitment to the United States
17 Army by investing more than \$88,000,000 in transportation infrastructure to provide the
18 United States Army with access throughout the year to training areas for maneuvers in the
19 Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex; and

20 **WHEREAS** Alaska is the only state in the nation with direct access to the Arctic, and
21 the United States Army soldiers in Alaska are experts in extreme cold weather operations; and

22 **WHEREAS** Alaska is home to the United States Army's Cold Regions Test Center
23 and has been the site of the United States Army's Arctic and cold weather testing since before
24 World War II; and

25 **WHEREAS** Alaska serves as a site activation command for the United States Missile
26 Defense Agency; and

27 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Defense recognizes Alaska as an
28 important strategic location and has recently increased and upgraded its missile defense
29 capability in the state;

30 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature strongly urges the United States
31 Department of the Army to maintain the current level of its combat-capable structure in

1 Alaska; and be it

2 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the United
3 States Department of the Army to apply the No Action Alternative provision in the
4 Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Army 2020 Force Structure
5 Realignment to both Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in
6 Anchorage.

7 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Chuck Hagel, United States
8 Secretary of Defense; the Honorable John M. McHugh, United States Secretary of the Army;
9 and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the
10 Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.