

House Bill 470 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE) (AM)

By: Representatives Blackmon of the 146th, Belton of the 112th, Smyre of the 135th, Coomer of the 14th, Williams of the 168th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 7 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
2 Department of Economic Development, so as to create a grant program to support counties
3 and municipalities that are military communities; to provide for legislative findings; to
4 provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

7 The General Assembly finds that Georgia's military installations represent the single largest
8 economic development investment in the state. These installations provide thousands of
9 jobs, both directly and indirectly, to several Georgia host communities. Further, the General
10 Assembly finds that it is in the best interest of these communities and this state to protect and
11 invest in these facilities. In addition, the General Assembly finds that investment into these
12 communities to further the relationship between the military communities and the military
13 installations, as well as any purpose that further integrates such communities and
14 installations, shall be considered a public benefit to this state.

15 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 2.**

16 Chapter 7 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department
17 of Economic Development, is amended by adding a new article to read as follows:

18 style="text-align:center">"ARTICLE 10

19 50-7-120.

20 As used in this article, the term:

21 (1) 'Department' means the Department of Economic Development.

22 (2) 'Federal review' means any review of a military installation by a federal entity for the
23 purpose of determining the viability of such military installation, including, but not

24 limited to, any review directly or indirectly related to the Defense Base Closure and
 25 Realignment Commission.

26 (3) 'Governor's Defense Initiative' means a program operated by the department tasked
 27 with the mission of reviewing the economic development opportunities at and around
 28 military installations and military communities.

29 (4) 'Grant goal' means any project, event, or activity that promotes a military installation,
 30 including, but not limited to:

31 (A) The promotion of recruitment, expansion, or retention of jobs at such military
 32 installation or within the military community in which it is located; or

33 (B) Preparation for any federal review.

34 (5) 'Military community' means a municipality or county that has within its jurisdiction
 35 a military installation or any other municipality or county that after reasonable review the
 36 department determines is economically impacted to a similar degree by the presence of
 37 a nearby military installation.

38 (6) 'Military installation' means a facility owned and operated by United States Army,
 39 Air Force, Navy, Marines, or Coast Guard that shelters military equipment and personnel
 40 and facilitates training and operations for such organizations.

41 (7) 'Public official' shall have the same meaning as in Code Section 50-36-2 or 2 U.S.C.
 42 Section 1602.

43 (8) 'Registered lobbyist' means a lobbyist as defined by Code Section 21-5-70 or 2
 44 U.S.C. Section 1602.

45 50-7-121.

46 (a) Subject to appropriations by the General Assembly, the department shall administer a
 47 grant program to be called the Defense Community Economic Development Fund for the
 48 purposes of providing assistance to military communities with grant goals.

49 (b) The amount of any grant awarded pursuant to this Code section shall be determined by
 50 the department on a case-by-case review of applications consistent with criteria to be
 51 prescribed by the department which shall include, but not be limited to, a consideration of
 52 the grant goal being proposed and the extent to which it:

53 (1) Furthers the relationship between the military community and military installation;

54 (2) Furthers the military installation's economic development investment into the military
 55 community; or

56 (3) Assists in efforts to defend the viability of a military installation from a federal
 57 review.

58 (c) Each military community shall match funds awarded pursuant to this article. The
59 department shall prescribe conditions for releasing funds based upon a military community
60 matching such funds.

61 (d) The department shall be authorized to charge such fees as are reasonable and necessary
62 to offset costs associated with processing applications submitted pursuant to this article.

63 50-7-122.

64 A military community may submit an application to the department for a grant to assist in
65 the pursuance of a grant goal. Such application shall be consistent with the requirements
66 established and on a form to be prescribed by the department; provided that such
67 application shall clearly communicate how such grant goal contributes to the economic
68 viability of a military installation in a military community.

69 50-7-123.

70 Grant funds awarded pursuant to this article shall not be utilized to contract with,
71 compensate, or reimburse a registered lobbyist. Such funds may be utilized to reimburse
72 or make payment for actual and reasonable expenses of a public official acting in such
73 public official's official capacity for his or her transportation, lodging, travel, food,
74 beverages, or registration fees which are directly related to an approved grant goal.

75 50-7-124.

76 The department shall submit any pending grant award to the Governor's Defense Initiative
77 for final review; provided, however, that the requirements of this Code section shall not be
78 applicable if the Governor's Defense Initiative ceases to exist.

79 50-7-125.

80 The department shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to implement the
81 purposes of this article."

82 **SECTION 3.**

83 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.