

FROM THE OFFICE OF
STATE REPRESENTATIVE RUTH JONES MCCLENDON

For Immediate Release

Monday, June 30, 2008

Contact: Janis Reinken, Chief of Staff
(512) 463-0708



**Representative McClendon to File
House Bill to Protect Military Installations
from Real Estate Development Encroachment**

(San Antonio) -- State Representative Ruth Jones McClendon (D-House District 120, San Antonio), whose House District includes the U.S. Army Post at Fort Sam Houston, is preparing to file a House Bill to help protect areas around military installations across the state from encroachment by residential and commercial developers. The ever expanding communities around these military installations can compromise the missions of the various installations, causing their demise. Information from the City of San Antonio Office of Military Affairs shows that 20 military installations nationwide that have been closed due to this problem since the last two BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) decisions in 1995 and 2005.

Representative McClendon said, "Community growth is extremely important. It is also quite clear that the state must implement protective measures against encroachment upon our military installations throughout Texas. We must encourage cooperation between private developers, local government, and training facilities, or everyone will suffer. We can accomplish these priorities by emphasizing 'intelligent growth' near our military installations."

Camp Bullis is a sub-installation of Fort Sam Houston and directly tied to its military missions since the field training missions complement the classroom training. Recently, the Camp has felt the heat from encroachment. Last year, Thomas Enterprises, Inc. made plans to develop a 106-acre community near Camp Bullis. However, they agreed to a one-year moratorium and an endangered species habitat study, to allow the City time to investigate how the land should be used in the area. Major General Russell Czerw, Fort Sam Houston Commander, reports that such encroachment would negatively impact the Camp's training missions, especially since the BRAC's 2005 action will increase personnel at Camp Bullis dramatically. The new Department of Defense Medical Education and Training Campus at Fort Sam Houston will increase the Army, Navy and Air Force student population to 9,000. These students will be attending more than seventeen enlisted medical specialty courses.

Representative McClendon served on the San Antonio City Council when the BRAC decision to close Kelly Air Force Base was announced. She said, "Believe me, I understand the sensitivity of protecting our military installations. If the encroachment near Camp Bullis is not addressed, both Fort Sam Houston and Camp Bullis could be in jeopardy." Because of the direct relationship between the two, the encroachment issues at Camp Bullis severely threaten the growth of Fort Sam Houston, which is expecting the influx of an additional 12,000 personnel by 2011. An adverse impact on these installations could be devastating to San Antonio, in light of the U.S. Department of Defense estimates that Fort Sam Houston and Camp Bullis have a \$5.3 billion impact on the area.

The proposed Bill would require developers to notify military installation authorities when construction involves significant tree clearing within a 5-mile radius of the installation. Also, developers and realtors would be required to inform prospective buyers that the property being purchased is adjacent to an active military facility. Additionally, the Bill would require completion of an endangered species survey before developers could begin clearing significant acreage of trees and shrubbery within the 5-mile radius. The area around Camp Bullis is home to 5 federally endangered species such as the golden-cheeked warbler, and overlaps 3 aquifer protection zones.

Camp Bullis relies heavily on night missions, and community lighting could affect these missions. Last year, HB 1852 authored by Representative Frank Corte passed into law, allowing counties to regulate lighting in areas within 5 miles of a military installation. Representative McClendon added, "The development occurring near Camp Bullis raises not only environmental and economic concerns, it has historical implications as well. In order to protect Fort Sam Houston, we must protect Camp Bullis by maintaining a greenbelt area surrounding as much of the facility's perimeter as possible." Camp Bullis was established in 1917.