

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

**Session:**

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## REPRESENTATIVE STEVE THOMPSON DISTRICT 10

### SPONSOR STATEMENT HB 316

*"An act relating to military facility zones in the state; relating to the development of housing in military facility zones; relating to the financing of projects in military facility zones; and providing for an effective date."*

House Bill 316 gives statutory authority to the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to establish "military facility zones" within the State of Alaska. Military facility zones are designated areas in close proximity to a military base (facility) where industrial or economic development will directly enhance the base's ability to fulfill its mission.

Military facility zones are successfully employed in other states as vehicles to obtain and administer funds for business development specifically relating to military activities. Funding for such zones in Alaska may be available from the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) and/or the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), or from federal New Market Tax Credits. Federal, state, or local public or private funding sources, credit, or guarantee programs can be made available directly to municipalities and boroughs that are working on specifically approved projects within a military facility zone.

Military facility zones create opportunities for significant benefits to Alaska and the nation. They will enhance economic activity near military installations and thereby facilitate economic growth and development in the state, especially where local governments are working in close partnership with their military counterparts. The zones promote expansion of infrastructure to benefit both military and civilian objectives, such as civil defense, homeland security and emergency response. They will enhance the nation's military capabilities by helping bases operate more effectively and efficiently.

Finally, military facility zones in Alaska will clearly demonstrate the state's continuing and substantive support for the armed services, and help defend against the negative impacts on Alaska's regional economies and military communities that might occur should Congress choose to implement the federal Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC).

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# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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## REPRESENTATIVE DAN SADDLER

To Co-Chair Thompson and Members of the MLV Committee:

Though I can't be there today, I wanted to put on record my strong support for HB 316, Military Facilities Zones. I was pleased to work on this legislation during the interim with Representatives Thompson and Feige, and to see it come before our committee. I see HB 316 as an important legislative tool to strengthen the position of military facilities in our state.

Alaska has 32 different military installations that are critical elements in our state economy. There are more than 24,000 active-duty, Guard and Reserve troops serving in Alaska, with an annual payroll of more than \$1.5 billion. About 13 percent of the state economy depends on the military, with the impact being especially significant near the larger installations.

These bases are a significant part of our nation's defense structure. They defend the nation's airspace and outer space; rapidly deploy forces around the world in times of crisis; support global logistics and transportation functions; and provide training opportunities that are unmatched elsewhere in the world.

We've heard recent news that does not bode well for Alaska's military bases. We've heard news of nearly half-trillion dollars in defense budget cuts over the next 10 years. We've heard of the possible loss of F-16s from Eielson Air Force Base, and of HC-130s from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. We've heard that nearly 270 civilian jobs are being cut from these two bases. And we've heard the Secretary of Defense raise the prospect of another round in the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process that could mean the further diminution of the military's presence in Alaska.

HB 316 can provide a number of significant benefits to our state and nation:

- It will provide a mechanism for bringing new federal and state money to bear on the bases.
- It will help develop infrastructure that can improve living conditions and economic prospects for the communities surrounding military facilities.
- It will help Alaska's bases become more efficient and better able to effectively perform their missions, strengthening the case against their realignment or closure.
- It will provide a mechanism to fund expansion of existing facilities to embrace new missions.
- It will help protect private - and public-sector jobs.
- It will provide another positive demonstration of Alaska's support for the military.

I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this legislation; please join me in supporting its passage.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dan Saddler".

Rep. Dan Saddler, Co-Chair, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

**Testimony for HB 316 from Jeff Troan, caller from Washington D.C.**

**First, to echo former Adjutant General Craig Campbell's statements, on a conceptual level, the MFZ legislation demonstrates Alaska's unique commitment to its military facilities, its military commanders, its servicemen and women, and the civilians that support them.**

**Practically, the MFZ allows local jurisdictions to create a zone around military facilities that targets public and private infrastructure development. This in-turn helps support current missions, enables mission expansion, and will encourage indirect and induced development around the base.**

**The vision is one of active local Zone Authorities working closely with military commanders, local municipal officials, economic development agencies, government contractors, Alaskan native corporations, and Alaskan large and small business, to enhance coordination and infrastructure development supporting the military in the state.**

**These goals are in-line with the highest ideals of trade organizations such as the Association of Defense Communities and its parent organization, the International Economic Development Council. These are groups with which we regularly work.**

**The MFZ legislation is enabling, in that it does not require any direct funding from the Alaskan Legislature. It does however provide a clear State endorsement to local authorities seeking to access Federal economic development funds, from agencies such as US Treasury, US Housing and Urban Development, and the US Department of Agriculture.**

**Finally, this legislation parallels similar work already in place in Virginia and Texas, and to a lesser degree in Arizona and Maryland.**