

# ATTACHMENT 1

## Fort Bragg Could Lose 16,000 Soldiers by 2020

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Under a worst-case scenario, Fort Bragg could lose 16,000 soldiers and defense civilians by 2020, causing a huge hit to the local economy.

The projections released Thursday are part of an [Army](#) review of possible force structure realignments and cuts made necessary by a shrinking defense budget.

The assessment for Fort Bragg shows "significant" damage to the region's economy, according to Michael Walden, an economist at North Carolina State University.

The draft report from U.S. Army Environmental Command details the possible environmental and socioeconomic effect of cuts at 30 posts.

According to the report, Fort Bragg is one of nine large Army installations to face a loss of 16,000 soldiers and civilians under the most extreme cuts.

Such a loss would deeply affect the surrounding area; however, Fort Bragg likely would remain the largest Army post in the nation.

According to Army projections, the region could lose 21,563 jobs if the cuts take place and take a nearly billion-dollar hit to the local economy.

Local governments would lose \$11.3 million in estimated sales tax receipts, and more than 40,000 residents would be expected to move out of the region.

Walden said such effects would be devastating to the local economy, especially since Fayetteville is so dependent on the military and defense industries.

"Fayetteville is essentially a one-company town," he said. "You rise and fall with the military."

Walden said officials should be able to see that some cuts, even if not to the level proposed in the Army report, are coming.

With the military slashing troop levels, it makes sense that the largest installation, Fort Bragg, would see some cuts.

Currently, roughly 10 percent of the Army is based at Fort Bragg, officials said.

The potential effect to the local economy would be the equivalent of a recession, Walden said.

"That's major," he said of the possible billion-dollar hit. "That's like a recession. There's no way to paint this as good."

The more sudden the cuts, the more painful they will be, Walden added.

Local officials have vowed to be aggressive in their campaign against the cuts.

U.S. Army Environmental Command has invited the public to comment on the proposed effects for each post.

Comments will be accepted until Aug. 25 and can be submitted through mail or electronically.

Mailed comments should be sent to U.S. Army Environmental Command, ATTN: SPEA Public Comments, 2450 Connell Road (Building 2264), Joint Base San Antonio-Fort Sam Houston, Texas 78234-7664.

Emailed comments can be sent to [usarmy.jbsa.aec.nepa@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.jbsa.aec.nepa@mail.mil).

The full report is available online, and copies will be available in several local libraries in about a week, Fort Bragg officials said.

Copies of the report will be at the John L. Throckmorton Library on Randolph Street on Fort Bragg, at the Cumberland County Public Library at 300 Maiden Lane, the Cliffdale Branch Library at 6882 Cliffdale Road, the Hamlet Public Library at 302 Main St. in Hamlet, the Hoke County Public Library at 334 N. Main St. in Raeford, the Moore County Public Library at 101 Saunders St. in Carthage, the Sandhill Regional Library System at 412 E. Franklin St. in Rockingham and the Scotland County Memorial Library at 312 W. Church St. in Laurinburg.

Final decisions on which installations will be selected for the cuts have not been made, officials said. The report is meant to help decision-makers identify specific units and organizations to be affected between 2015 and 2020.

Nearly all Army installations will be affected in some way by additional reductions, according to officials.

But before the Army makes final decisions, it will host community listening sessions to hear public input, according to Fort Bragg.

Doug Peters, president of the Fayetteville Regional Chamber, said the local business community would "weigh in early and often both privately and through the August public comment period."

"Without question, the current worst-case forecast would impact our region, and we will continue to be proactive and aggressive in leading the charge in both understanding the long-term implications and buffering any resulting impact from what the final projections may be," Peters said. "As a business community, we are not willing to accept worst-case scenario. Our community has long supported our military presence and will continue to do so."

Peters said the chamber already has assembled a multi-county coalition that was formed to address the potential loss of the 440th Airlift Wing, a one-star Air Force Reserve unit on Fort Bragg that has been targeted for inactivation.

That coalition is quickly transitioning to ensure Fort Bragg's long-term viability, he said.

The group plans to maintain constant communication between Fort Bragg, the Department of the Defense and Army headquarters and will share concerns with regional elected officials to find solutions to problems that put the post at risk.

Peters said the region also is working to diversify the local economy -- a step that Walden advocated.

Walden said the Fayetteville region recognizes it is too dependent on the military.

"This is not new news," he said.

The Army report was also concerning to Fort Bragg's congressional representatives.

Rep. Renee Ellmers, a Republican from Dunn, said she was deeply concerned by the possible loss of 16,000 troops from Fort Bragg, saying it would "only place further strain on our military's capabilities and readiness."

"As with the Defense Department's decision to cut Fort Bragg's 440th Airlift Wing, I will continue to fight against these unnecessary cuts on behalf of the Fort Bragg community," Ellmers said. "Peace through strength is not a mere talking point -- it is a proven policy that ensures our nation can continue to be a powerful force for freedom in a dangerous world."

Rep. David Price, a Democrat whose district represents part of Cumberland and Harnett counties, said the report should be read with caution because it was not a final decision.

"The Army's supplemental planning assessment makes clear that Fort Bragg and its personnel have an invaluable economic impact in Fayetteville and the surrounding community," Price said. "It should be emphasized that this report is for planning purposes only, and no specific cuts have been proposed to Congress at this time. As the Army continues to evaluate its future force structure, Congress will have ample opportunity to judge whether those recommendations are prudent."

The Army report is the latest warning of potential troop cuts to come from U.S. Army Environmental Command.

Last year, a similar report looked at a possible 8,000-soldier cut to Fort Bragg's population.

But since that report, officials have announced the need of even deeper troop cuts, from 562,000 soldiers to 420,000, because of savings required by the Budget Control Act of 2011.

The cuts outlined in the latest report would reduce the active force to below 300,000.

Both reports found cuts would have a significant effect on the population, regional economy, schools and housing.

According to the report, the military accounts for 20 percent of Cumberland County's workforce and also makes up a sizeable portion of the workforce in Hoke and Harnett counties.

The losses could lead to additional job cuts and fewer job opportunities for displaced Army employees, according to the report. However, it would benefit facility shortages on Fort Bragg and help relieve pressure from school overcrowding.