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Rep. Sloan Participates in Military & Veterans Affairs Task Force

Rep. Tom Sloan (R, Lawrence) participated in the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Military & Veterans Affairs Task Force meeting. Among the topics discussed at the meeting were: use of landfill methane gas to power base electric systems, job training for veterans leaving the service, siting of wind turbines, the impact on local communities of federal reductions in the Defense budget, and state programs to aid veterans.

Capturing the escaping methane gas from landfills is environmentally responsible and cost-effective for communities and the military. Wind turbines sited in the "wrong" location can affect the performance of Dept. of Defense radar systems. The Department of Defense is shrinking the size of the Army, Air Force, Marines, and Navy, and Congress is reducing the Defense budget for acquisitions by \$46 billion. The combination means that thousands of military personnel will be entering the job market within the next 12-18 months and many businesses will see reductions in purchases by the Department.

"The reduction in military personnel has been predicted for several years as we withdraw from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars," said Sloan. To assist our veterans, I have worked to pass legislation making it easier for veterans with specific skills (e.g., medical professions, truck drivers) to have their education and training recognized by Kansas' licensing agencies."

The Department of Defense knows how much money they provide primary project contractors, e.g., (Boeing), but does not know how that money is spread across the country to subcontractors. "The reduction of purchases by the Dept. of Defense will impact Lawrence because Cottonwood has a contract to build tie-down straps," Sloan said. "We do not often think or know about the number of small businesses and organizations that provide technical and product support to the military. Reductions in Cottonwood's revenues will have impacts on services to some of our more vulnerable residents."

Rep. Sloan also provided information to the Kansas Departments of Commerce and Labor about a federal grant program to survey businesses about their contracts with military vendors. The goal of the program is to help states and communities determine whether they will need federal assistance in helping businesses transition to other customers and products. "If the Department of Defense does not know how Kansas and Kansans will be affected by the reduction in federal spending, then we must use all available resources to determine our risk and how we can protect our economy and neighbors," said Sloan.

Rep. Sloan is Chairman of the Vision 2020 Committee and a member of two U.S. Department of Energy Advisory Committees and a Federal Communications Committee. He also is a member of NCSL's Energy Supply Task Force and a frequent commentator to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and EPA staff on implications to states and state residents of proposed federal regulations.

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