

Eastern Gulf Test & Training Range Military Mission Line 2021 DSI Position Paper



Prepared by



DEFENSE SUPPORT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE
OKALOOSA, SANTA ROSA AND WALTON COUNTIES

August 2021

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DEFENSE SUPPORT INITIATIVES COMMITTEE
OKALOOSA, SANTA ROSA AND WALTON COUNTIES

August 29, 2021

Dear Sir / Madam:

The Defense Support Initiatives (DSI) Committee is a military installation advocacy group sponsored by the Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County; DBA One Okaloosa EDC. It is comprised of 25 select retired military personnel, defense contractors and representatives of the seven Military Affairs Committees from Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton Counties surrounding the Eglin Complex. The mission of the DSI is to support and promote the local military installations, missions and their positive economic contributions to the tri-county area.

As identified in the 2020 Florida Defense Factbook, northwest Florida installations contribute an annual economic impact exceeding \$22 Billion and generate over 209,000 jobs. Okaloosa County in Northwest Florida houses the largest Air Force installation in the Department of Defense; Eglin Air Force Base. Team Eglin contributes \$10B annually to the local economy and provides nearly 79,000 jobs. The 96th Test Wing, Eglin's host wing, is the test and evaluation center for Air Force air-delivered weapons, navigation and guidance systems, Command and Control systems, and AF Special Operations Command Systems. Team Eglin supports multi-service combat ready forces while delivering full spectrum support to DoD.

The 96th Test Wing manages the Eastern Gulf Test and Training Range (EGTTR; aka Eglin Gulf Test & Training Range, Joint Gulf Range). The EGTTR connects test & training ranges and capabilities across the eastern Gulf of Mexico extending from NW Florida to Key West. This multi-service training area supports simultaneous maritime, air and land training exercises. The EGTTR provides unique capabilities to test, train with, and evaluate high-altitude supersonic air combat training, air-to-air missile testing, drone targeting, hypersonic weapons testing, space launches/landings, and other activities. A 2012 Air Force Long Range Stand-Off Weapons study identified the EGTTR as the only U.S. continental range capable of supporting future technologically advanced weapons testing.

Due to its tremendous capabilities, the EGTTR complex is an integral part of DoD's Training Resources Strategy, is vital for testing the next generation of air armaments, and for training in conditions consistent with those expected in actual conflict. It is utilized by multiple users, including DoD, other government agencies, foreign partner countries, and private companies. Due to technological advancements, missions are being pushed farther from land into the Federal waters of the EGTTR as a result of increased utilization, faster and longer reaching telemetry, and larger safety footprint requirements. The 2021 RAND Institute analysis identified the EGTTR as a priority.

As a result of Team Eglin's collective mission and the EGTTR, Okaloosa County installations provide half of the total Northwest Florida region's military impact. Team Eglin's direct defense spending exceeds \$3.7 Billion, and provides the highest contribution in the Northwest Florida region towering at 61%—concurrent to the Northwest Florida region providing the state's highest overall regional defense impact at 23%.

Eight of the Top 10 national defense contractors have a presence in Okaloosa County supporting the highest defense personnel location in the state in 2019, and the highest personnel spending location at \$1.9 Billion annually.¹

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Defense contracting awards in the Northwest Florida region have grown by 28% since 2015 with a monetary value increase of 63% during the same time period. Okaloosa's contracting value exceeded \$1,428 Billion in 2020—more than double that of the other counties combined and at 75% for the region.² Additionally, with nearly 7,000 contract awards Okaloosa County supports 50% of all defense contract awards in the region. As stated earlier, the Northwest Florida region provides the largest economic impact contributions to the state's total military economy, and also offers the highest concentration of defense contracting jobs of all eight state regions.

2020 Defense Contracts

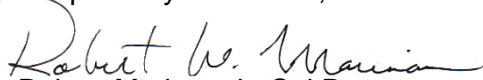
Escambia	\$ 357,382,333
Santa Rosa	\$ 85,665,657
Okaloosa	\$1,428,727,572
Walton	\$ 3,789,420
Holmes	\$ 7,015,443
Bay	\$ 2,177,824


The EGTTT, the largest test and training range in the continental United States, is identified by Department of Defense Directive as a *national asset* that cannot be replicated anywhere in the U.S.³ Federal policies have protected the Eastern Gulf of Mexico by restricting oil and natural gas drilling and exploration since 1983 with a buffer zone; now defined by the Military Mission Line established in 2006. This mandated north-south Military Mission Line protects the EGTTT from encroachment of activities incompatible with military missions. Oil drilling structures and associated exploratory activities, and wind turbine infrastructure east of the MML would be incompatible with military activities, negatively impact our military's readiness and compromise our nation's military superiority.

As weapon systems and aircraft become more sophisticated and long-reaching, test and training ranges take on even greater importance in military capabilities and national security. The EGTTT is a unique resource offering tremendous capabilities for joint test and training exercises. Due to its expansive size allowing for simultaneous maritime, air and land training exercises, the EGTTT is an integral part of DoD's Training Resource Strategy.

Elimination of the MML would decrease the military capability/capacity in the EGTTT. This regional position paper (consisting of 29 civic, private sector and public sector resolutions and proclamations) supports the United States military and defense strategy by extending the Military Mission Line moratorium and opposing any activities east of the MML that are deemed incompatible to the military mission. Congressional Members are respectfully requested to permanently extend protection of the Eastern Gulf Test & Training Range and the Military Mission Line beyond 2022 by amending or replacing the current Public Law 109-432, entitled the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006, extending the moratorium protection. Thank you for your consideration and continued service.

Respectfully Submitted,


Robert Marinan, Lt Col Ret
DSI Chairman


Kay Rasmussen, CECD
DSI Manager

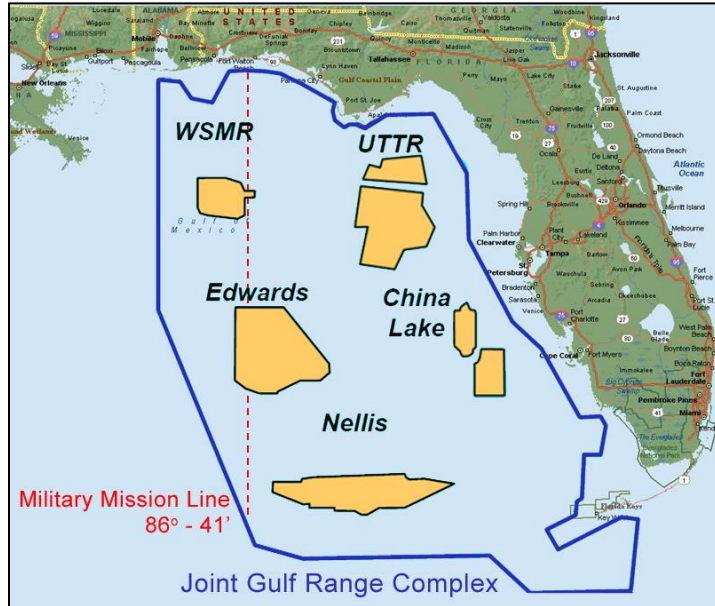
Attachments

¹ Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation – Defense Spending by State 2019

² USspending.gov

³ Department of Defense Directive Number 3200.11; Office of the Secretary of Defense, Preserving Military Readiness in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, May 2018

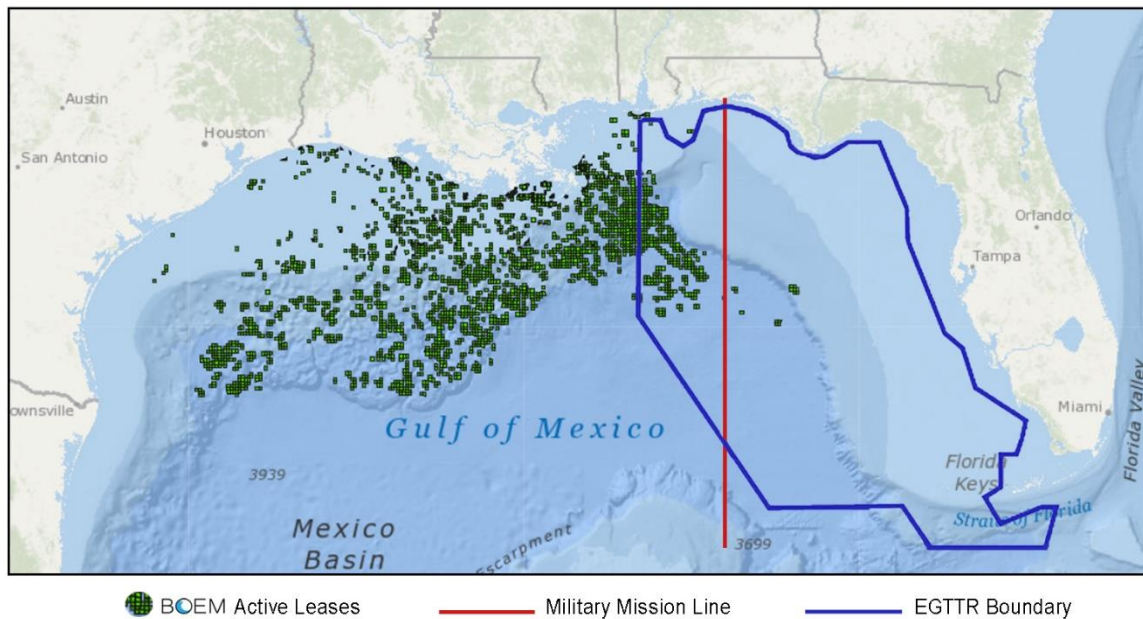
DSI EGTRR MML Position Paper



U.S. Military Ranges

- Joint Gulf Range (aka, EGTRR)
- White Sands Missile Range
- Utah Test & Training Range
- Edwards Flight Test Range
- NAWS China Lake
- Nevada Test & Training Range

Gulf of Mexico BOEM Active Leases and Eglin Gulf Test & Training Range May 2020



Exhibits

EGTR MML Support

Public Sector

1. Florida Senate Resolution SR550
2. Escambia County Board of County Commissioners
3. Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners
4. Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners
5. Town of Cinco Bayou
6. City of Fort Walton Beach
7. City of Pensacola

Private Sector

8. Building Industry Association Okaloosa-Walton
9. Crestview Chamber of Commerce
10. Defense Support Initiatives Committee
11. Destin Chamber of Commerce
12. Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County; One Okaloosa
13. Eglin Federal Credit Union
14. Emerald Coast Association of Realtors
15. Emerald Coast Military Affairs Council
16. ERA American Real Estate
17. Florida's Great Northwest
18. Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce
19. Key West Chamber of Commerce
20. Navarre Area Chamber of Commerce
21. Navarre Beach Area Chamber of Commerce
22. Navarre Beach Area Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Council
23. Niceville-Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce
24. Niceville-Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Council
25. Santa Rosa County Chamber of Commerce
26. Santa Rosa County Military Affairs Committee
27. Technology Coast Manufacturing and Engineering Network
28. Walton Area Chamber of Commerce
29. Walton County Economic Development Alliance