

North Carolina Consortium for the Department of Homeland Security's proposed new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF)

Background

On Jan. 19 2006, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) called for “expressions of interest” to site a proposed new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF). The facility would be jointly administered by the departments of Homeland Security, Health and Human Services (DHHS), and Agriculture (USDA). NBAF would house scientists from all three agencies, and would enhance the nation’s ability to address human pathogens, foreign animal diseases and threats to our food supply.

The NBAF physical site would require a minimum of 30 acres for a 500,000 square foot building in an area that would provide (1) research capabilities (to include medical, veterinary, public health and agriculture) and proximity to existing R&D programs, bio-manufacturing companies and scientific community, (2) technical workforce and local labor force, (3) proximity to highways, an international airport, utility infrastructure and security, and (4) community acceptance (local and state government, academia, industry, agricultural and commodity stakeholders). These four criteria would be evaluated by DHS in selecting a site.

North Carolina formed a consortium of more than 30 public and private entities (universities, government agencies, agricultural stakeholders, non profit organizations and private sector) and proposed locating this facility in the central portion of the state.

Timeline

The DHS received 29 applications by the March 31 due date. On Aug. 9, DHS announced that 14 consortia, including North Carolina, had advanced to the second phase of site selection. **Now, NC has three months to prepare for the second round of selection.** These preparations include providing additional information to DHS, government relations at the local, state and federal level, and executing a communications plan to garner further public support. By the end of 2006, DHS expects to review more detailed information and narrow the list of candidates to three or four sites, each of which will then undergo environmental impact studies in 2007 and 2008. A final decision would be made in 2008. Construction is projected for 2009 to 2013.

Safety Considerations

NBAF will require biocontainment laboratories at Biosafety Level 3 (BSL3) and possibly Biosafety Level 4 (BSL4). North Carolina currently houses several BSL3 labs at our major universities as well as at several private companies. The National Institutes of Health has been monitoring safety at BSL4 labs for over 20 years, and there have been no accidents or security breaches.

Economic Implications

- Projected facility construction cost: \$450 million (DHS estimate).
- Construction jobs: 1,000 to 1,500 over a four-year period.
- Facility employees: 250-400 scientists, technicians and support staff.
- Economic impact to North Carolina: \$1.65 billion over 20 year period of projected 50 year life span (NC Dept of Commerce Fiscal Cost-Benefit Analysis)
- Facility will also be magnet for growth of related research, agriculture and biotech industries.

NC strengths

- Top university system with human and animal health expertise.
- A top producer in the nation for agribusiness.
- Expertise in agro-security, infectious diseases, public health and vaccine development.
- Related industries such as pharmaceutical, computing/IT and bio-manufacturing companies.
- Fifty-year history of state support for technology sector; many facilities with BSL3 laboratories.
- Strong infrastructure and proximity to three major international airports: RDU, PTI, CLT.
- Federal agencies include NIEHS, EPA and USDA (Eastern Regional office).
- Nationally ranked for its highly trained biotech work force and quality of life.

For further information:

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North Carolina Consortium for Department of Homeland Security NBAF

Letters of Support for NC Proposal submitted on March 30, 2006

1. Government

Federal

Senators Richard Burr and Elizabeth Dole
Representatives Bob Etheridge, David Price and Brad Miller

State

NC Governor Michael Easley
NC Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Steve Troxler, Commissioner
NCDA Veterinary Services Division, David Marshall, NC State Veterinarian
NCDA Emergency Programs Division, Marty Zaluski, Director
NC Dept of Health and Human Services, Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary
NC Division of Public Health, State Public Health Lab, Lou Turner, Director
NC Division of Public Health, Division of Epidemiology, Steve Cline, Director
NC Dept of Environment and Natural Resources, William Ross, Secretary

Local

Durham County, Michael Ruffin, County Manager
Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce, Libby Barnes, President & CEO
Granville County, Dudley Watts, County Manager
Granville County Economic Development Commission, Leon Turner, Executive Director
City of Winston Salem, Allen Joines, Mayor

2. Universities

University of North Carolina System, Erskine Bowles, President
North Carolina State University, James Oblinger, Chancellor
Warwick Arden, Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine
Johnny Wynne, Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
UNC Chapel Hill, Dr. William Roper, Dean, School of Medicine
Jules Heisler, Senior Associate Dean, School of Public Health
Robert Johnston, Director, Carolina Vaccine Institute
Duke University Medical Center, Barton Haynes, Director, Duke Human Vaccine Institute
Duke University, Fred Sparling, Director, Southeast Regional Center for Emerging Infections & Bio-defense
North Carolina Central University, James Ammons, Chancellor
Wake Forest University Health Sciences, Richard Dean, President & CEO
East Carolina University, Steve Ballard, Chancellor
Forsyth Technical Community College, Gary Green, President

3. Agricultural/Producer Groups

NC Farm Bureau Federation Inc., Larry Wooten, President
NC Dairy Producers Association, Norman Jordan, President
NC Cattlemen's Association, Bundy Plyler, Executive Director
NC Pork Council, Deborah Johnson, CEO
NC Poultry Federation, Robert Ford, Executive Director
Prestage Farms, John L. Prestage, Senior Vice President

4. Agencies & Industries

US Environmental Protection Agency, William Laxton, Director
NC Biotechnology Center, Kenneth Tindall, Senior VP Science & Business Development
RTI International, Victoria Haynes, President and CEO
RTP Foundation, Rick Weddle, President and CEO
Piedmont Triad Research Park, Chris Price, Executive Director and Senior VP WFU HS
Merck, Agnes Speight, Public Affairs Manager
Embrex, Vivian Doelling, VP R&D; Yvette Diamondidis, DVM, Senior Manager, Avian Research Center
AlphaVax, Peter Young, President & CEO, Johnathan Smith, CSO, Jeffrey Chulay, CMO
ILS Inc., Thomas Rao, President and POC Susan Kinney, VP Corporate Growth
Advanced Animal Diagnostics, Douglas Darr, VP Business & Technology Development
Serenex, George Young, Senior VP
NC Biotech Piedmont Triad, Gwyn Riddick, Director
Winston Salem Business, Robert Leak, President
Jonathan Richmond & Associates, Inc., Jonathan Richmond, CEO
Metabolon, Todd Lynch, CFO
Eisai Inc., Louis Arp, VP Production Operations