

Date of Hearing: January 14, 2014

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

Sharon Quirk-Silva, Chair

AB 585 (Fox) – As Amended: January 6, 2014

SUBJECT: Department of Veterans Affairs: use of real property.

SUMMARY: Pertains to a plan for utilization of real property owned by the California Department of Veterans Affairs (Department). Specifically, this bill, by January 1, 2015, requires the Department to develop a master plan for the use of unused or underutilized real property owned by the department, for purposes that will benefit California veterans, as specified, and to make a preferred recommendation for use of the property.

EXISTING LAW: The Department has specified powers and duties relating to various programs serving veterans. The Department constitutes a public corporation that is authorized to hold property on behalf of the state. Existing Law

The Department's mission is to serve California's veterans and their families. Under the Military and Veterans Code Section 694 CalVet is a public corporation and as part of fulfilling its mission "may on behalf of the State hold property [...]."

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown at this time.

COMMENTS: According to the Author: "AB 585 ensures that veteran property owned by the state become centers of veteran activity and support services. Specifically, AB 585 requires the California Department of Veteran Affairs (CalVet) to develop a master plan for the use of unused or underutilized land owned by the state department."

From the opening of the Yountville Veterans Home in 1884, the California Veterans Home System has steadily grown and flourished. CalVet now owns and operates eight veteran homes throughout the state. According to CalVet:

- Yountville - Located in the heart of Napa Valley, the Veterans Home of California Yountville is a community of and for veterans.
- Barstow - Located in the high desert of Southern California, off interstate 15 and midway between Los Angeles and Las Vegas and about an hour's drive from Ontario Airport.
- Chula Vista - Located on a 30-acre site off Telegraph Canyon Road, adjacent to Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center and located in coastal, urban Southern California.
- Fresno - Located on 27 acres in the heart of the fertile San Joaquin Valley near to the City of Fresno.

- Lancaster - The William J. "Pete" Knight Veterans Home of California–Lancaster is located in the high-desert area of Southern California, just off the Antelope Valley Freeway.
- Redding - Located on 27 acres in the heart of the Northern Sacramento Valley.
- Ventura - Located near the gleaming California Pacific Ocean coastline, about an hour's drive northwest of Los Angeles, 35 miles south of Santa Barbara.
- West Los Angeles - Located in the County of Los Angeles. These veteran homes provide veterans rehabilitative, residential, and medical care in a home-like environment.

In summary, from their modest beginnings as a single home, the State Veterans Homes have grown into a state-wide system of healthcare, housing, community, and support for thousands of our veterans. The bill recognizes that what we have now is a system and should be considered as such in the Department's long term planning process.

Some of the homes are located on a very limited real property footprint. However, some have substantial real property appurtenant to them, owned by the Department. The Department may or may not own some very limited amount real property not contiguous with the Homes, and the Department owns real property received in foreclosure or similar proceedings arising out of its Farm and Home Loan program.

The bill directs the Department to make a plan for utilization of real property owned by it, property which is unused or underutilized, to maximize its use for serving veterans. This bill does not direct the Department to assign any particular use(s) to particular properties. This bill recognizes that "campus like" and clustered services/uses are efficient and convenient for veterans. This bill promotes using property already owned by the Department to the maximum practicable extent to serve veterans, which is an efficient use of state resources.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLARIFICATION/AMENDMENT

- 1) Extend the deadline date so that it is not contemporaneous with the potential effective date of this bill.
- 2) Specify that the Master Plan should consider the inventory of real properties as a system, including how prospective uses at these properties could complement one another and complement existing community services/needs.
- 3) Clarify that residential real estate owned property in the CalVet inventory is not included in the scope of this bill.
- 4) Clarify that the Master Plan should include a prioritized list of projects/uses should any be found to be appropriate.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

American Legion, Department of California
AMVETS, Department of California
California Association of County Veterans Service Officer
California State Commanders Veterans Council
Military Officers Association of America, California Council of Chapters
Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of California
Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council

Opposition

None on File.

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