

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces New Strategic Initiative to Strengthen New Jersey's Defense Ecosystem

Posted on - 09/3/2025

The Office of Strategic Defense Investment will serve as the state's center of excellence and joint coordination point for all defense-related priorities

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today announced the launch of the Office of Strategic Defense Investment, which will champion New Jersey's defense industry by attracting new missions, safeguarding the competitiveness and sustainability of the state's existing defense infrastructure, and fostering industry growth. Housed within the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA), the Office of Strategic Defense Investment will work to elevate New Jersey's defense sector by providing it with focused support, advocacy, and strategic planning for long-term growth on par with the state's other key industries.

"New Jersey's defense sector is a cornerstone of our state's economy and our nation's security. With world-class military installations and a vibrant network of defense contractors, the Garden State plays a critical role in advancing cutting-edge military technology," **said Governor Murphy**. "The creation of the Office of Strategic Defense Investment demonstrates our commitment to ensuring New Jersey remains a leader in this vital industry. We will continue working closely with our partners in government, industry, and the military to strengthen New Jersey's defense ecosystem, keeping our communities safe and our economy strong."

New Jersey's defense ecosystem is vital to national security, innovation, research and development, manufacturing, and technological advancements. The state hosts major military installations such as [Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst](https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/ry1rscb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/ry1rscb>), [Picatinny Arsenal](https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/7q2rscb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/7q2rscb>), [Naval Weapons Station Earle](https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/nj3rscb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/nj3rscb>), [and the 177th Fighter Wing](https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/3b4rscb) (<https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/3b4rscb>), along with a strong network of defense contractors. Together, these assets play a crucial role in supporting the nation's war-fighting capabilities.

"Under Governor Murphy's leadership, New Jersey has remained a leader in the defense industry, and the Office of Strategic Defense Investment will ensure the sector's longevity and growth, which is essential for job creation and economic sustainability," **said NJEDA Chief Executive Officer Tim Sullivan**. "By supporting the defense sector, we are driving economic growth and fueling innovation, while supporting our service members, their families, and our national security."

The Office of Strategic Defense Investment will serve as New Jersey's center of excellence and coordination hub for defense priorities, collaborating closely with the Governor's Office, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA), and leading defense stakeholders such as the Defense Enhancement Coalition (DEC), which supports Joint

Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and Naval Weapons Station Earle, and the [Picatinny Enhancement Coalition \(https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/j44rscb\)](https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/j44rscb)(PEC), which advocates for Picatinny Arsenal.

“New Jersey is home to one of the nation’s most significant defense ecosystems, from three major military installations to thousands of defense contractors, employing more than 70,000 New Jerseyans and contributing billions of dollars to our state’s economy,” **said NJEDA Chief of Staff and External Affairs Officer Emma Corrado, who will oversee the Office of Strategic Defense Investment.** “This isn’t just about national security – it’s about jobs, innovation, and long term economic competitiveness for communities across the Garden State. Under Governor Murphy’s leadership, this new initiative is a critical step to ensuring our state remains coordinated, competitive, and strong in advancing our defense mission.”

The defense sector is a significant employer in New Jersey, with more than 54,000 personnel working directly on the three major military bases, including more than 46,000 at JBMDL, 6,000 at Picatinny, and 1,500 at NWSE. An additional 22,000 New Jerseyans are employed as contractors or within the supply chain. These installations and contractors bring substantial federal investment to the state, with the [Department of Defense \(https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/zw5rscb\)](https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/zw5rscb)(DoD) allocating approximately \$9.4 billion to New Jersey in Fiscal Year 2023. This funding, which represents about 1.3 percent of the state’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), includes \$2 billion for salaries of active duty and civilian personnel, and over \$7 billion in defense contracts awarded within the state.

Currently, New Jersey is home to roughly 7,091 defense contractors who collectively receive about \$7.3 billion in DoD contracts. Of this, over \$1.4 billion supports manufacturing and research and development across more than 1,700 New Jersey companies, underscoring the state’s critical role in advancing defense technologies.

“New Jersey’s citizenry and industry alike have always stood on the front line of national defense,” **said Brigadier General Yvonne L. Mays, The Adjutant General of New Jersey and Commissioner of Military and Veterans Affairs.** “We have it all: human talent, strategic location, and historic track record for excellence in critical requirements. New Jersey’s patriots set the conditions for success and victory.”

“New Jersey has always led the way in national defense and innovation. We have a proud history of supporting our military - from the vital missions at our installations to the enduring legacy of the Battleship New Jersey,” **said Congressman Donald Norcross.** “We know how to build ‘Made in America’ products by drawing on our world-class universities, top-ranked K–12 schools, and strong workforce training programs. With the creation of the Office of Strategic Defense Investment, we’ll harness our one-of-a-kind Jersey talent to keep our communities and servicemembers safe, while staying at the forefront of defense technology for generations to come.”

“The manufacturing, research, and development conducted by New Jersey’s defense industry is vital to maintaining our military’s advantage around the world and sustaining New Jersey’s world-class innovation economy. I am proud to have championed Picatinny Arsenal and the critical work of our defense manufacturing base since my first day in Congress,” **said Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill.** “As threats to our national security continue to grow around the world, the American defense industry has never been more important. We must continue to support the cutting-edge research and development New Jersey is known for and solidify our state’s leadership role in these efforts.”

“Picatinny Arsenal has long been a center of excellence that is home to world-class research and development facilities, and a powerful economic engine that provides thousands of New Jerseyans with high-quality careers,” **said Senator Anthony M. Bucco (R-25).** “The creation of the Office of Strategic Defense Investment is an important step to solidify New Jersey’s role as a leader in our nation’s defense industry, protect our military assets, and continue to deliver cutting-edge technology to support the brave men and women who defend our nation.”

“New Jersey’s vital defense installations fuel billions in federal investment and tens of thousands of good jobs,” **said**

Senator Raj Mukherji (NJ-32), Chairman of the Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee and a military intelligence veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps. "The new Office of Strategic Defense Investment will keep our state competitive, protect missions, and strengthen one of the most important pillars of our economy, while safeguarding New Jersey's vital contributions to national security."

"I commend the New Jersey Economic Development Authority for creating the Office of Strategic Defense Investment," **said Emil Kaunitz, a member of the Defense Enhancement Coalition.** "This initiative levels the field in enabling New Jersey to aggressively compete for federal jobs and infrastructure funds, which will create new job opportunities and bolster our state's economy."

"Picatinny Arsenal is essential to the nation's defense and the foremost authority on ammunition in the world," **said Marty Kane, Member of the Picatinny Enhancement Coalition Board of Directors.** "You would be hard pressed to find any conventional ammunition in the Army's inventory that does not trace its development back to Picatinny. In addition, Picatinny has played a critical role in the Army and Marine Corps' artillery as witnessed by Picatinny's role in the development, production, and fielding of the M777 Howitzer, a system which has also proved vital in Ukraine's fight for freedom. The Picatinny Enhancement Coalition works to highlight Picatinny's extraordinary accomplishments and an Office of Strategic Defense Investment would be hugely helpful in introducing a much wider audience to the crucial work being accomplished in New Jersey by Picatinny and our other military installations."

In July, Governor Murphy sent a [letter \(https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/fp6rscb\)](https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5qyfn/nrddit/fp6rscb) to U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth and U.S. Secretary of the Army Daniel Driscoll expressing his concerns regarding the Army's proposed Transformation Initiative. The plan to restructure the Army's acquisition enterprise by consolidating 12 Program Executive Offices (PEOs) into seven Capability Executive Offices (CEOs) could directly impact New Jersey's Picatinny Arsenal.

Governor Phil Murphy

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