

Acting Governor Guadagno Releases New Jersey Military Installation Growth and Development Task Force's Final Report

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Task Force Shares Suggestions to Strengthen New Jersey's Military Installations

Trenton, NJ – Joined by State, federal, and local officials, Acting Governor Kim Guadagno, Chair of the New Jersey Military Installation Growth and Development Task Force (Task Force), today released the Task Force's final report.

The Task Force was charged with forging an effective blueprint for securing the long-term growth and viability of New Jersey's military bases and U.S. Coast Guard installations. Together, New Jersey's military installations and activities are the state's largest employer, directly and indirectly supporting more than 73,000 jobs and adding \$6.5 billion to the Gross Domestic Product.

"The State must take all reasonable steps to fortify our military bases, and it must take them now. New Jersey must demonstrate with a unified voice that it is military friendly and that the retention of missions not only makes strategic sense, but also makes economic sense," said Acting Governor Guadagno. "This is not a Republican or Democrat issue or a red or blue issue. It's a red, white and blue issue on which we all can agree. Only together can we protect the military bases that provide so much to our communities."

The Task Force report presents a series of recommendations for the state, local governments, interested stakeholders, and impacted communities to help improve the vitality of the state's military installations and their supporting industries and inform New Jersey's federal representatives. These suggestions include:

- **Promote and facilitate a coordinated approach to economic development related to our military installations and the industries that support them.** Appointing a Military and Defense Economic Ombudsman to oversee and coordinate the state's efforts will improve the economic outcomes for our military bases and defense industry. New Jersey must also work to attract private capital to and around our bases and ensure that private sector businesses choose to partner with New Jersey installations – not those installations in other states.
- **Align New Jersey's workforce with the military's and defense industry's current and future needs.** Improving New Jersey's pipeline of STEM-educated employees who can fill future military and defense jobs will prepare New Jersey's military bases – and the industries that support them – to meet the 21st century's economic and military needs.
- **Develop synergistic opportunities for our military installations to work in cooperation with local governments and their communities.** All government officials should examine creative ways to maximize their limited public funds, including sharing services between bases and neighboring governments, minimizing encroachment through strategic land use planning, increasing energy resiliency, and increasing supportive coalitions.
- **Aggressively advocate in Washington, D.C. for our military installations by strengthening relationships with our federal partners.** New Jersey's voice must be loud, consistent, and unified to actively engage with members of Congress, congressional staffers, and military leaders.

In addition to the Acting Governor, Task Force members included Brigadier General Michael L. Cuniff, Adjutant General of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Melissa Orsen, CEO of the Economic

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Development Authority, Michele Brown, President and CEO of Choose New Jersey, the Honorable Jim Saxton, former Congressman, and Paul Boudreau, President of the Morris County Chamber of Commerce.

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