

Governor Chris Christie Announces Next-Generation Aircraft To Help Preserve Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst

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Joint Base is State's Second-Largest Employer, Annually Contributing \$7 Billion to NJ's Economy

Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie today announced that Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst has been selected through a highly competitive process to receive KC-46A aircraft, which is critical to the long-term survival of the Joint Base, as well as state and national public safety and security.

"This is a monumental decision for Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and the people of New Jersey, including the tens of thousands of military families who dedicate their lives by serving at the base," Governor Christie said. "I thank New Jersey's bipartisan congressional delegation for their successful co-leadership in this effort and Air Force Secretary James for answering my call to make the proper decision to choose the Joint Base among a competitive field. Gaining the KC-46A aircraft means securing the Joint Base's future for the next six decades. I'm proud of and excited for the base and with this news look forward to seeing it continue to grow as a beacon of strength, hope and security for our state, region and nation."

The 305th Air Mobility Wing is the Joint Base's main Active Duty United States Air Force (USAF) component, specializing in global mobility and aerial refueling. The 305th currently operates a fleet of 32 KC-10s, a dated and expensive plane that unless replaced would have cost the Joint Base more than half of its jobs, almost cementing its closure.

The Joint Base is New Jersey's second largest employer, supporting more than 40,000 military and civilian employees and contributing more than \$7 billion annually to the state's economy, including approximately \$4.2 billion in gross domestic product and approximately \$118.7 million in annual state tax revenues. Of the five bases that were under consideration for this upgrade, the Joint Base ranked highest in U.S. Air Force Scoring that examined each base's military assets.

The KC-46A is currently deployed in Kansas, New Hampshire, and Oklahoma. Other bases selected to receive the KC-46A tanker are experiencing job growth ranging from 100 to 350 direct jobs and specialized military construction project spending ranging from \$42 million to \$267 million.

The Christie Administration has been supportive of the state's military installations and the service members and their families who call them home. The Governor signed Executive Order No. 134 in 2013, creating the Military Installation Growth and Development Task Force, tasked with helping New Jersey preserve, enhance, and strengthen its military installations. The Task Force issued a report in July 2015 with several recommendations that have since been enacted, including the creation of a New Jersey Military and Defense Ombudsman.

Other actions taken to support the military include the approval of millions of dollars of supplemental state budget appropriations, including \$1.5 million for an Asset Management Database intended to create an online portal enabling companies to tap into the expertise of New Jersey's university faculty researchers, high-tech facilities, intellectual property and other academic resources.

In August, Governor Christie signed bipartisan legislation to minimize civilian encroachment upon military installations and encourage the development of compatible uses of land near military bases, and a bill creating a Military Skills Council to work with the state's world-class higher education institutions, defense industry companies and other

workforce development groups to ensure New Jersey citizens are prepared for 21st century roles in the military and defense industry.

As part of his commitment to the state's active duty servicemen and servicewomen and 400,000-plus veterans, Governor Christie recently initiated a state income tax exemption for those honorably discharged from active service in the military or the National Guard and signed a law creating the Vet2Vet hotline. Over the past five years, there have been almost 49,000 calls to the peer-to-peer hotline for veterans experiencing a mental health crisis.

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