



Governor's Military Council Q1 2025 Business Meeting Summary

January 27, 2025

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce
402 W. Broadway, 10th Floor, San Diego, CA 92101

Chair of the Governor's Military Council, Vice Admiral (US Coast Guard, Retired) Jody Breckenridge called the meeting to order at 1:00pm, welcoming the Council to the Q1 2025 Business Meeting, held in conjunction with the Navy's WEST Conference. She thanked the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce for their generous support in providing the meeting space and introduced Chamber President and CEO Ms. Justine Murray for opening remarks. Ms. Murray welcomed the Council and highlighted the defense sector's vital role in the region's economy.

Following opening remarks, roll call was conducted by Executive Director Jon Siepmann. A quorum was established, and Rear Admiral Johnson led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Breckenridge acknowledged the presence of two members of the

public who would be offering comments and invited any additional public participants to do the same.

Members Present:

- Vice Admiral (Ret.) Jody Breckenridge, Chair, Governor's Military Council
- Lieutenant General (Ret.) Edward Hanlon, Vice Chair, Governor's Military Council
- Ms. Sara Aminzadeh, Deputy Secretary California Natural Resources Agency
- Mr. Samuel Assefa, Director, Governor's Office of Planning and Research
- Brigadier General Robert Paoletti, California Military Department
- Mr. Thomas Berard, Senior Executive Service (Ret.), Member, Governor's Military Council
- Mr. Joseph Czyzyk, Member, Governor's Military Council
- Ms. Melinda Grant, Undersecretary, California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency
- Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Andrew Hackleman, Member, Governor's Military Council
- Rear Admiral (Ret.) Jim Johnson, Member, Governor's Military Council

- Mr. Jeffery A. Klein, Senior Executive Service (Ret.), Member, Governor's Military Council
- Assemblymember Tom Lackey
- Mr. Scott Lichtig, Deputy Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency
- Colonel (Ret.) Fred Meurer, Member, Governor's Military Council
- Ms. Dee Dee Myers, Director, California Office of Business and Economic Development (GO Biz)
- Command Sergeant Major (Ret.) Roberta Santiago, Member, Governor's Military Council
- Ms. Lindsey Sin, Secretary, California Department of Veterans Affairs (CALVET)
- Mr. Rhys Williams. Chief Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

Public Comments

Chair Breckenridge opened the floor for public comment and read the meeting's public comment policy. Ms. Kelli Douglas from the Defense State Liaison Office addressed the Council with a legislative update. Key priorities included SB 99 (Blakespear), which exempts DoD-certified off-base family childcare centers from state certification and supports military families and nearby civilian

workforces. Assemblymember Gonzalez was expected to introduce legislation supporting military children with special needs relocating to California.

Ms. MaryBeth Greiner from the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) then provided updates on defense infrastructure investments, including several Defense Community Infrastructure Program projects in the San Diego region. There was no further public comment.

Action Items

The Council approved the Q4 2024 Business Meeting Minutes from San Francisco. A motion to approve was made by Councilmember Andrew Hacklman and seconded by Councilmember Joe Czyzyk. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Executive Director Updates

Executive Director Jon Siepmann updated the Council on preparations for the Spring 2025 Executive Roundtable and the 2025 California Defense Leadership Summit, which will be held October 27-29 in Monterey in conjunction with the Association of Defense Communities Installation Innovation Forum. He also recognized the Council and state leadership's role in supporting the Governor's

military retiree tax exemption, now included in the budget (\$20K income exemption with income caps). Additional legislative efforts, including AB 53, remain in progress.

Mr. Siepmann noted increasing Council focus on military talent retention, reciprocity for professional licensing, and health care access. VADM Breckenridge emphasized ADC's intent to elevate healthcare access as a national concern.

Military Economic Impact Study

Ethan Nash (GO-Biz) and Devin Lavelle (California Research Bureau) presented highlights from the seventh edition of California's Military Economic Impact Study. The report is now hosted on the GMC website. Funded this year by GO-Biz following the expiration of federal grants, the report provides refined analysis of defense sector contributions to California's economy. RADM David Boone, Executive Director of the San Diego Military Advisory Council (SDMAC), also shared updates on the 2024 SDMAC regional report.

California Jobs First Initiative

Emily Desai, on behalf of GO-Biz Director Dee Dee Myers, presented on the Governor's California Jobs First Initiative. She reported \$450M invested as part of the state's first economic blueprint in 20 years.

Aerospace and Defense were identified as pilot sectors. Ms. Desai announced the upcoming participation of 15 California small businesses in the Paris Air Show. CALVET Secretary Lindsey Sin added that the California Transition Assistance Program (CalTAP) is aligning with Jobs First to better retain veterans in the workforce.

NAVWAR Redevelopment Update

Greg Geisen, NAVWAR Project Manager, briefed the Council on ongoing redevelopment at the NAVWAR/Old Town Campus complex. He highlighted the strategic importance of San Diego, the Navy's use of enhanced-use leases, and anticipated project timelines, which may extend 5-15 years. Councilmembers discussed the mission-critical nature of redevelopment and regional economic impacts.

Regenerative Grazing Initiative

Major Eric Czaja from the Naval Postgraduate School introduced the Regenerative Grazing Open Air Lab (R-GOAL) at Camp San Luis Obispo. He emphasized regenerative agriculture's role in installation resilience, fuel mitigation, and sustainability. California is the first state to formally define regenerative agriculture. The program was recommended for addition to the Council's stakeholder working group.

Agency Updates and Council Discussion

- GO-LCI: Eileen Sanchez, speaking on behalf of Director Sam Assefa, shared updates on DoD grant work, including CAMEOCAMP, the winding down of CASCADE and CADENCE, and the launch of the CALMIR initiative.
- CALVET: Secretary Lindsey Sin detailed ongoing support for veterans impacted by LA wildfires, success of the Veterans Health Initiative, and efforts to expand home loan availability. CALVET also launched new research on suicide prevention, including among Native American veterans.
- CMD: BG Robert Paoletti described the Guard's wildfire support operations in LA and international partnerships with Ukraine, Nigeria, and potential expansion to Mexico.
- CNRA: Deputy Secretary Sara Aminzadeh reported on energy resilience projects, including \$42M for energy storage at Camp Pendleton and ongoing Sentinel Landscape initiatives in the Mojave.
- CalEPA: Deputy Secretary Scott Lichtig addressed wildfire debris removal, Tijuana River remediation progress, and the resolution of environmental standards at the Oakland Army Base.

- BCSH: Undersecretary Melinda Grant described the agency's housing recovery work, licensing reciprocity success, and upcoming veterans support events.

Councilmembers were encouraged to submit additional updates to staff. Executive Director Siepmann noted that authorizing language for the Council would be reviewed this year and invited feedback. Assemblymember Lackey shared appreciation for the Council's intervention in helping sustain essential medical services near China Lake.

Chair Breckenridge closed the meeting by highlighting the Navy's WEST Conference and previewing the next Council meeting, scheduled during LA Fleet Week in May. She expressed gratitude to the San Diego Regional Chamber and adjourned the meeting at 4:30pm.