



Governor's Military Council
Q2 2025 Business Meeting Summary
May 22, 2025

Crowne Plaza Los Angeles Harbor
601 S Palos Verdes St, San Pedro, CA 90731

Vice Admiral (Ret.) Jody Breckenridge, Chair of the Governor's Military Council, opened the meeting at 8:39am by welcoming members, agency partners, and installation representatives. She highlighted the Council's evolving role in aligning state resources with defense community needs, especially considering upcoming events such as the Governor's Principals Meeting and the All-California Defense Leadership Summit. The Chair emphasized the importance of surfacing installation-level challenges and identifying opportunities for coordinated state action, including housing, energy resilience, and workforce pathways. She thanked participants for their continued service and collaboration.

A formal roll call was conducted by The Council's Executive Director Jon Siepmann, who confirmed a quorum of appointed members present. Attendees included senior representatives from California's military installations, the Governor's Office, and relevant state agencies.

Roll Call & Members Present:

- Vice Admiral (Ret.) Jody Breckenridge, Chair Governor's Military Council
- Lieutenant General (Ret.) Edward Hanlon, Vice Chair, Governor's Military Council
- COL Jon Siepmann, Executive Director, Governor's Military Council

- Ms. Noaki Schwartz, Deputy Secretary for Equity and Environmental Justice, California Natural Resources Agency
- Major General (Ret.) Craig Cooning, Member, Governor's Military Council
- Mr. Derek Kirk, Senior Advisor, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz)
- Rear Admiral (Ret.) James Johnson, Member, Governor's Military Council
- Assemblyman Tom Lackey
- Mr. Jeffery A. Klein, Senior Executive Service (Ret.), Member, Governor's Military Council
- Mr. Scott Lichtig, Deputy Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency
- Colonel (Ret.) Fred Meurer, Member, Governor's Military Council
- Brigadier General Robert Paoletti, California Military Department
- Ms. Eileen Sanchez, Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI)
- Command Sergeant Major Roberta Santiago, Member, California Military Council
- Mr. Rhys Williams. Chief Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

Public Comments

Chair Breckenridge invited members of the public to offer comments. The following members of the public spoke:

Mr. Ed Peura, Vice President, South Bay Aerospace Alliance

Mr. Peura emphasized the Alliance's role in supporting military installations and advocating on their behalf. He cautioned that when infrastructure challenges go unaddressed, it can fuel conversations at the federal level about downsizing or relocating missions. He cited recent discussions around U.S. Space Command's location and noted that although the command is currently headquartered in Colorado, congressional representatives from that state are actively working to make it permanent. Peura highlighted a recent editorial suggesting a compromise relocation to Alabama, subtly raising awareness that similar relocations could threaten California missions if

proactive support isn't sustained. He urged stakeholders to remain vigilant and engaged to prevent such outcomes.

Mr. Tom Lasser, Retired Military

Mr. Lasser spoke about the persistent issue of California being one of the few states that continues to tax military retirement pay. He called for the state to finally enact a full tax exemption, citing recent legislative attempts and ongoing advocacy efforts. He framed the exemption as a critical step toward retaining veterans, easing their transition, and honoring their service, while also contributing to the state's workforce and economic strength.

Colonel Dermanoski, Commander, Los Angeles Air Force Base

Colonel Dermanoski thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak and highlighted local challenges impacting mission readiness. He underscored the difficulties associated with housing affordability and retention of personnel, especially those with special needs. He emphasized the strategic importance of the South Bay region, home to dynamic aerospace and defense operations, and stressed the need for continued collaboration with local and state governments to support the base's mission and community integration. His remarks also reinforced the significance of understanding Space Force's unique operational profile.

Action Items

Council members reviewed the Q1 2025 meeting minutes. The Chair invited any comments or revisions; none were offered. The minutes were approved by consensus without amendment.

Executive Director's Update

Executive Director Jon Siepmann provided an overview of recent Council activities and coordination efforts with state and federal partners. He highlighted the outcomes from the spring State-Military Principals Meeting, which brought together senior state agency leaders and installation commanders to discuss shared priorities, including infrastructure investment, installation resilience, and support for military families. He previewed the Council's upcoming engagement in the October 2025 Installation Innovation

Forum, which will be held in partnership with the Association of Defense Communities in Monterey and serve as the seventh annual California Defense Leadership Summit. In response to a question from Councilmember Fred Meurer, LCI's Eileen Sanchez shared details on a federally funded initiative to support coordinated planning between installations and surrounding communities. California is one of three states selected for this effort, which will establish a formal multi-sector working group to strengthen regional resilience and integration.

Lockheed Martin X-59 Briefing

Mr. Pat LeBeau, Program Manager at Lockheed Martin Skunk Works, provided a briefing on the X-59 Low Boom Flight Demonstrator. He discussed the aircraft's potential to enable commercial supersonic flight over land by significantly reducing sonic boom noise. Mr. LeBeau emphasized the importance of California's Mojave Desert test ranges and the role of state support in maintaining an innovative-friendly environment for aerospace development. Council members expressed interest in ensuring continued collaboration between industry and state agencies to preserve test infrastructure and workforce pipelines.

Extraction Barrier and Brackish Water Treatment Project

Mr. Robert Richardson, Engineering Manager with the United Water Conservation District, presented an overview of the district's extraction barrier and brackish water treatment project. The initiative aims to effectively protect regional groundwater supplies from a century-old seawater intrusion while expanding its water supply sources and access to potable water for surrounding communities, including the local military installations.

Mr. Richardson highlighted the project's benefits, particularly its support for long-term installation military readiness and enhanced water security goal at the Naval Base Ventura County. He underscored the critical role of intergovernmental coordination and the need for state-level investment in infrastructure that supports both civilian and defense needs.

Coast Guard Base LA/LB Briefing

Commander Robert Poitinger, Commanding Officer of Coast Guard Base Los Angeles/Long Beach, delivered a briefing on the base's operations, infrastructure, and strategic value. He described the base's core missions, including port security, logistics, and support for maritime operations, and noted the critical role the facility plays in the broader Southern California region.

Commander Poitinger identified key challenges such as facility aging, space constraints, and future modernization needs. He emphasized the importance of continued engagement with state and local stakeholders to address shared infrastructure concerns and explore potential areas for collaboration.

Shipbuilding Brief

Ms. Lindsey Silvia, Senior Manager of Economic Development at the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, provided a briefing on California's shipbuilding and repair sector. She emphasized the industry's significance to national defense and the state economy, citing its robust supply chain, skilled labor base, and ongoing modernization efforts.

Ms. Silvia shared regional insights from San Diego, including public-private initiatives to strengthen the shipbuilding workforce and support veteran transitions into the industry. She encouraged continued state investment in infrastructure, permitting efficiency, and policy alignment to ensure California remains competitive as a maritime defense hub.

Agency Updates and Council Discussion

Land and Climate Innovation Office (LCI): Eileen Sanchez provided an update on behalf of the LCI Office. She reported the successful conclusion of the long-standing Cadence and Cascade grants, which supported defense manufacturing and cybersecurity workforce development, respectively. LCI is now transitioning to the Military Installation Readiness Grant program. The first phase includes hiring Defense Community Liaisons, beginning with support for Naval Air Station Lemoore. Future phases will involve issuing RFPs for contractors to assist in tabletop exercises and design a statewide framework for installation resilience. Ms. Sanchez also noted collaboration with the

California State Transportation Agency on a resilience study that incorporates military communities and includes partners such as Cal OES and other state agencies.

California Military Department (CMD): Major General Robert Paoletti briefed the Council on California National Guard activities. He reported positive trends in unit retention and participation, noting improvements following his transition to the 40th Infantry Division. The Guard continues to focus on readiness, recruitment, and maintenance through both training and community support missions. General Paoletti highlighted the National Guard's full funding status and emphasized their ongoing contributions to both state and federal missions. General Paoletti continued later in the meeting to an overview of the California National Guard's growing role in national response coordination, including training and equipment-sharing related to aerial firefighting capabilities. He noted that California has become an informal training hub for national firefighting resources due to the Guard's experience and extensive assets. He emphasized the importance of interagency partnerships and state support, crediting California's consistent investment in its Guard forces as a critical differentiator from other states. He also highlighted the Guard's pioneering work in developing decontamination procedures during the Paradise Fire, which have since been adopted by other states and the U.S. Army.

California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA): Scott Lichtig provided comments on recent environmental response activities, highlighting CalEPA's coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the aftermath of the Palisades Fire. He emphasized the importance of integrating lessons learned from local environmental recovery efforts into broader emergency preparedness planning. Lichtig acknowledged California's leadership in fostering collaboration across jurisdictions and expressed support for strengthening the connection between state agencies and military installations on environmental resilience and cleanup strategies.

Following Lichtig's update, Chair Breckenridge reflected on recent discussions with San Francisco's emergency management and utility leaders during Fleet

Week planning meetings. She noted the city's progress in integrating emergency coordination across sectors and praised the leadership of local government in using wildfire scenarios to inform future preparedness and response operations. Rhys Williams of the Governor's Office added that California's size and experience have enabled the state to institutionalize effective disaster response mechanisms. He highlighted recent examples of improved coordination between federal and state partners, such as accelerated debris clearance and waste removal processes, and commended CalEPA's central role in post-disaster environmental management.

California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Apprenticeship Standards / Department of Labor and Workforce Development: Executive Director Kaina Pereira spoke to current efforts aimed at supporting workforce pipelines for priority populations, including Indigenous communities and veterans. He noted that 11 workforce grants had been recently awarded, with a 21-month performance window expected to close in the coming year. He encouraged ongoing dialogue between state workforce agencies and installations to better align employment and training opportunities with emerging needs in defense communities.

California State Assembly: Assemblyman Tom Lackey expressed deep appreciation for the Council's mission and affirmed his personal commitment to its work. He emphasized the importance of communication between the state and federal military installations and noted that participation in Council activities helps inform his legislative decision-making. He specifically acknowledged the housing crisis as an area in which Council members can collectively advance impactful solutions, noting that housing stability benefits not only military families but California communities more broadly.

Governor's Office: Rhys Williams provided an overview of the Administration's priorities related to installation resilience and energy reliability. He highlighted the state's efforts to better align military energy needs with broader grid stability initiatives and emphasized the importance of identifying opportunities for federal-state coordination to accelerate critical infrastructure projects.

Williams also noted that interagency collaboration on permitting and regulatory timelines remains a key focus area, especially for defense-related installations pursuing renewable energy development.

Following his remarks, a discussion ensued between Councilmember Fred Meurer, Chair Breckenridge, and Rhys Williams regarding the implementation of resilience policies and the role of the Council in surfacing potential policy barriers. Williams encouraged Councilmembers to continue bringing forward site-specific challenges that could inform statewide solutions and shared that the Governor's Office is open to further engagement with DOD and federal partners to advance shared energy security objectives.

The Council discussed leveraging past lessons, promoting interagency coordination, and developing forward-looking arguments grounded in national security. Members highlighted the strategic opportunity to engage installation commanders now—before federal discussions become restricted—and expressed strong support for developing a cohesive strategy that can be socialized across stakeholders.

With no additional Councilmember updates, Chair Breckenridge thanked participants for their insights and continued commitment to supporting California's defense communities. She encouraged members to submit local issue updates and proposals for the upcoming Defense Leadership Summit. The meeting was adjourned at 12:01pm.