

Military Asset and Security Strategy Task Force

Military Task Force Accomplishments

The Massachusetts Military Asset and Security Strategy Task Force, created and chaired by Lt. Governor Tim Murray, is a nationwide model for how states support military bases and their surrounding communities. By working with federal, state, and local officials, industry representatives, and nonprofit leaders, the Patrick-Murray Administration and quasi-public agencies within Massachusetts have aligned their efforts to strengthen our six bases and the 46,500 jobs associated with them. The six military bases include: Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee; Barnes Air National Guard Base in Westfield; Natick Soldier Systems Center; Fort Devens; Hanscom Air Force Base; and the Massachusetts Military Reservation (MMR) on Cape Cod.

This comprehensive initiative addresses education, workforce training, infrastructure improvements, environmental/utility matters, veterans' services, housing, and transportation issues related to the missions and people at military installations. Massachusetts is the only state to propose a military bond bill authorizing tens of millions of dollars in potential funding to support infrastructure projects on every military base in the state. Additionally, Massachusetts is the only state offering technical assistance and spending money as part of a first-in-nation initiative to work with all military bases to identify and develop opportunities to reduce energy operating costs and enhance energy security.

Executive Branch Leadership and Partnership - On February 27, 2012 as Acting Governor, and with the full support of Governor Patrick, Lt. Governor Tim Murray signed an Executive Order to create a Military Asset and Security Strategy Task Force. The Task Force is chaired by the Lt. Governor and formalizes the informal working group he led since 2011. In 2012 Lt. Governor Murray and the Task Force visited each of the state's six military bases. In May 2012, Lt. Governor Murray expanded the Task Force to include five subcommittees: Business, Industry, and Mission Alignment; Education, Innovation and Workforce Development; Community and Municipal Support and Engagement; Military Mission, Operations, Opportunities and Efficiencies; and Military Leaders. In April 2013, Lt. Governor Murray invited Senator Elizabeth Warren and Congresswoman Niki Tsongas to serve on the Executive Committee of the Task Force. Additionally every member of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation can appoint a staff member to the Task Force. The Senate and House in the State Legislature created a Legislative Caucus within the Task Force to engage their colleagues in the legislature.

Signature Initiatives

Strategic Planning – The Task Force is continuing their analysis to review military installations to determine where there are opportunities to fill vacant spaces, upgrade aging infrastructure, become more energy efficient, identify new missions, and build partnerships to bring more jobs and economic development at and around each site. It also regularly works to identify steps the Commonwealth can take to remedy problem areas before preliminary recommendations from the federal government are adopted and missions are implemented. It also uses its analysis to advise the Governor and Legislature regarding the ongoing efforts by the U.S. Department of Defense to close, realign, restructure, streamline, or otherwise take actions that would impact military installations located within the Commonwealth. This effort has also allowed the Task Force to release data showing the impact of the bases and defense industry in Massachusetts.

Partnership Development – The Task Force has developed significant partnerships to advance its goals. The Task Force engages with industry, nonprofit, municipal officials, elected officials, and community members surrounding each installation in order to enhance, expand, add, or otherwise improve missions, programs, facilities, and operations on or affecting the military installations in the Commonwealth. These partners include but are not restricted to business associations (led by the Defense Technology Initiative and the New England Council), education officials, workforce development officials, municipal officials, elected officials, and veteran and military family support agencies. After visiting every base, the Task Force met with White House and Pentagon officials to brief them on the effort, and they have kept in constant communication with the Massachusetts Congressional delegation regarding strategy, new mission opportunities, budget, and legislation. One example of the success of such partnerships is the protection of the Air Operations Group at Otis Air National Guard Base. By partnering with Congressman Keating, we were able to protect the 141 jobs in the Group. Also, the Task Force established a relationship with Lt. General C.D. Moore of the U.S. Air Force to make a strong case for enhancing and supporting the mission and the people at Hanscom Air Force Base, while also strengthening its partnerships with leadership at the other bases.

Legislative and Funding Initiatives – The Task Force received \$350,000 in the FY13 budget to implement its' work. The Task Force also announced \$2.5 million for infrastructure work outside the main gate to the U.S. Army's Natick Soldier Systems Center. Additionally, it celebrated the opening of the Massachusetts National Guard's new \$47 million Joint Force Headquarters on the grounds of Hanscom Air Force Base. With Congresswoman Tsongas, EOEEA, and DOER the Task Force announced \$1.5 million to become the only state offering technical assistance and spending state money as part of a first-in-the-nation initiative to identify and develop opportunities to reduce energy operating costs and enhance energy security at all six bases. Notably, the Task Force worked with Governor Patrick to file a Military Bond Bill in March 2013. Called "An Act Encouraging the Improvement, Expansion and Development of Military Installations in the Commonwealth," this bill seeks up to \$177 million in funding over the next five years to increase mission, jobs, and economic development at each of the six bases.

The Patrick Administration's Vision for Action Steps in 2013–2014

- In collaboration with local military leadership, the Task Force will continue to pursue opportunities that enhance military missions, improve base efficiencies, enhance quality of life for military members and families, and foster mutually beneficial service agreements between military bases and surrounding communities.
- Work diligently with the Massachusetts congressional delegation and military leadership to better position our bases and their military units for sustainable long-term missions.
- Continue the successful staffing model led by the Executive Director in coordination between the National Guard, MassDevelopment, Federal Staff, Executive Branch Agencies, State Legislature, and the Task Force's Subcommittees.
- Pursue energy projects to build on the Commonwealth's leadership in clean energy, further align Massachusetts bases with the U.S. Department of Defense priorities, and reduce energy consumption and costs.
- Seek near-term approval for the \$177 million Military Bond Bill (House Bill 3334) filed by Governor Patrick. Once the bill becomes law, we will screen opportunities and recommend Commonwealth investment for those projects that improve the long-term viability each respective installation.
- The Task Force will share its ideas with and partner with the communities surrounding our military installations in order to consolidate community support and use it as an asset.
- The Task Force, through MassDevelopment and the National Guard, will continue to work with appropriate Pentagon offices to ensure that our actions are legally acceptable to the services in accordance with existing statutes.
- The Task Force will continue to work closely with its business and academic partners to ensure that the military units capitalize on their location in this technology-rich region. We will foster relationships that enhance workforce development, Research and Development, acquisition, Cyber Security, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) opportunities to the mutual benefit of all parties.
- Collaborate with the National Guard and the Executive Offices of Education, Housing and Economic Development, and Labor and Workforce Development to bring a full-spectrum cyber education and workforce development program to the Commonwealth. This initiative will serve our local economy and will assist in meeting the military's near- and long-term requirements for cybersecurity professionals.