

# THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

## RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE USE OF “COMMANDERS COUNCILS”

### Resolution Summary

The Commanders Council is intended to serve as the Department of Defense’s primary point of contact with the state. A Commanders Council, comprised of the commanders of the military installations in a state, or region, is similar in concept to a group of in-state businesses, manufacturers or trade associations banding together to provide information and cooperate with other citizens. The Commanders Council is designed to address the two problem issues most often noted by state policymakers - the inability of the military to speak with one voice and the lack of information about who to contact.

A Commanders Council offers the Department of Defense, state and local policymakers, and other stakeholder’s four immediate benefits:

#### **1. Commanders Councils Facilitate A “Single Voice” For The Military To State And Regional Policymakers**

State Commanders Councils provide the Department of Defense installation commanders a single voice and unified positions on issues critical to the military and the military’s relations with its civilian neighbors. Critical issues include military family issues, shared energy infrastructures, sustainability of natural resources. Commanders Councils can provide information in clear, consistent, and continuous modes; delivered by military personnel that understand state and local policymakers and their decision-making processes.

#### **2. Commanders Councils Create A Consensus-Building Forum For All Of The Military In A State**

The Commanders Council can provide in-state installation commanders with a forum to identify and reach consensus on advocacy and policy priorities and coordinate state and local government engagement, rather than creating multiple or contrary positions that are then communicated to policymakers from multiple commands and installations. The Commanders Council can serve both the state and military as a forum to coordinate on current and future mission and basing challenges (e.g., BRAC), cross-cutting training capabilities (such as urban training), and multi-interest education, training, and family support opportunities.

### **3. Commanders Councils Enhance The State’s Understanding of the Needs Of The Military**

The typical military installation’s operations can be incomprehensible to those outside of the fence line, thereby resulting in inadvertent barriers to communication and interaction by both sides. The Commanders Council can serve to reduce those barriers and raise the profile of the military within the state in a way that no single installation can. It can increase state leadership understanding of the military, the activities that occur on the installation and military sustainability needs in the state, while at the same time educating policymakers and stakeholders about the military’s economic value to the state. By also serving as an “information clearinghouse” that gathers and disseminates pertinent information, the Commanders Council creates a forum for sustainability discussions; and develops a collaborative base for planning, education and advocacy for the military, policymakers and stakeholders.

### **4. Commanders Councils Can Promote Military-Civilian Partnerships**

The military’s education needs – child dependents and military personnel seeking college degrees – can be better promoted through a statewide initiative involving the Commanders Council and local and state educators. Water quality, conservation easements, wildlife species protection, and other sustainability programs can best be achieved through a Commanders Council that partners with state and local interests. Linking state civilian job training and academic research opportunities to the needs of the military can best be achieved through a Commanders Council. A Commanders Council can be the “One Stop” point of contact for state and local policymakers.

#### **Additional Resources**

- [Arizona Range Commanders Summit](#)
- [United States Department of Defense Sustainable Ranges Initiative](#)

#### **CSG Management Directives**

- **Management Directive #1:** The Council of State Governments encourages Commanders Councils to include the National Guard Adjutant Generals in each state to facilitate mission training and coordination, interaction with the Governor, and for combined public relations.

- **Management Directive #2:** The Council of State Governments encourages the Department of Defense to stand-up Commanders Councils in states which host multiple installations and commands, as a matter of department policy.
- **Management Directive #3:** CSG staff will send this resolution to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; Dr. Dorothy Robyn, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Installations & Environment; Dr. Samuel D. Kleinman, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Readiness; and David Duma, Principal Deputy Director, Operational Test & Evaluation.

## **THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS**

### **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE USE OF “COMMANDERS COUNCILS”**

**WHEREAS**, the Commanders Council is intended to serve as the Department of Defense’s primary point of contact with the state;

**WHEREAS**, a Commanders Council, comprised of the commanders of the military installations in a state, or region, is similar in concept to a group of in-state businesses, manufacturers or trade associations banding together to provide information and cooperate with state and local government and other citizens;

**WHEREAS**, the Commanders Council is designed to address the two problem issues most often noted by state policymakers: 1) the inability of the military to speak with a single voice, and 2) the lack of information about who to contact;

**WHEREAS**, Commanders Councils provide a formal structure for the military to interface with state government, work collaboratively on regional planning, conservation, economic and quality of life issues, discuss encroachment prevention efforts and exchange ideas about a range of state and local policies impacting the military and mission readiness.

**WHEREAS**, a Commanders Council, modeled after the successful Arizona Range Commanders Summit and the North Carolina Commanders Council, have proven to be an effective tool in strengthening military, state and community relationships and offer state and local policymakers, and other stakeholders, four immediate benefits:

- a “single voice” for the military to communicate with state and regional policymakers;
- a consensus-building forum for military installations in a state to clearly and consistently express Department of Defense policy positions;
- an ability to enhance the state’s understanding of the needs of the military; and
- the capacity to better promote military-civilian partnerships and cooperation.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Department of Defense, its military installations across the country and the communities in which they reside, derive considerable benefits from their establishment.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Commanders Councils should be encouraged to include the National Guard Adjutant Generals in each state to facilitate mission training and coordination, interaction with the Governor, and for combined public relations.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that The Council of State Governments encourages the Department of Defense to stand-up Commanders Councils in states which host multiple installations and commands, as a matter of department policy.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this resolution be sent to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; Dr. Dorothy Robyn, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Installations & Environment; Dr. Samuel D. Kleinman, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Readiness; and David Duma, Principal Deputy Director, Operational Test & Evaluation.

Adopted by the Governing Board this 6<sup>th</sup> Day of December, 2010 at CSG's 2010 National Conference in Providence, Rhode Island.