



Western Governors' Association Policy Resolution 11-11

Improving Coordination and Natural Resource Management with the Department of Defense

A. BACKGROUND

1. The mission of the United States Department of Defense (DoD) is to “provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of our country.” For the military to support and fulfill this mission it must be able to conduct realistic testing and training, and our military forces must have access to such resources as land, sea, air and broadcast frequency spectrum.
2. Many military training operations involve multiple states and are not confined to a single installation or range. More than 5,000 different locations or sites, when added together, utilize more than 30 million acres of land. Unique properties of the military installations, ranges and training routes in the West allow testing and training not available elsewhere in the country
3. Many installations in the West were originally located near sparsely populated communities, agricultural areas and undeveloped open spaces. Now they are surrounded by urban population centers. Past Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) actions have significantly impacted the Western states, and encroachment will be a consideration for future BRAC actions. A military mission can be impacted by encroachment because of: restrictions caused by utility-scale energy and transmission development; endangered species habitat both on and off of military installations; competition for airspace; and urban growth with its inherent light pollution, noise issues and frequency interference issues around military installations.
4. It is estimated that nationally more than 300 federally listed species are on lands managed by the Department of Defense. This is an unintended consequence of growth adjacent to and around installations and ranges where there has been a lack of open space planning essential to the support of species’ habitats. This raises the importance and criticality of these habitats on DoD property. Accordingly, this can pose a challenge for wildlife management and increase the restrictions and limitations to military training that can be conducted on these bases and ranges.
5. DOD controls and manages invasive species in accordance with individual plans governing each installation or base. The goals of DOD’s Invasive Species Management Program are prevention, control of invasive species on military installations, and restoration using native plants. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) also has a number of control programs, and is authorized to implement a 50/50 Federal/local cost sharing arrangement with State and local governments for managing nuisance aquatic plants in waterways not under the control of USACE or other Federal agencies.

6. Western states are quickly developing renewable energy resources and permitting new transmission corridors. DoD is a key stakeholder and supporter of renewable energy sources and is a major consumer of electricity and transportation fuels through its operation of major installations. DoD accounts for more than 90 percent of government purchases of transportation fuels and is under a mandate to increase its reliance on renewable energy sources through Executive Order 13423, which requires DoD (and other Federal agencies) to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
7. In January 2010, President Obama signed an Executive Order establishing the Council of Governors. The Council is intended to foster a partnership between State and Federal government officials to address matters of mutual interest pertaining to the National Guard, homeland defense and civil support activities.
8. Depending on the location, siting of energy production and transmission facilities can adversely impact military testing and training activities. DoD has made efforts over the last several years to proactively engage on renewable energy projects near military testing and training areas. These efforts include the development of a clearinghouse that allows DoD to be proactive in identifying potential conflicts a renewable energy project may have with military operations. Additionally, in October 2009, DoD was a signatory to a Memorandum of Understanding between nine federal agencies regarding coordination in federal agency review of electric transmission facilities on Federal lands.
9. The Department of Defense initiated the Western Regional Partnership (WRP) to work collaboratively with other Federal agencies, states (Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah) and Tribal governments in the southwest to address issues that include endangered species, renewable energy development and wildfires. This partnership provides an ability to work with military services across the WRP Region. WRP committees address issues of importance to Western states and DoD, including border issues, disaster preparedness, Tribal engagement, energy, geospatial information systems, land use, aviation and wildlife corridors. The WRP currently has a representative on the WGA Forest Health Advisory Committee.

B. GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT

1. Western Governors believe that much action has been taken to preserve the military mission viability in the West and recommends further collaboration with the DoD.
2. The Western Governors support the Council of Governors as a means to promote coordination on issues pertaining to the National Guard, homeland defense, and civil support activities.
3. Western Governors recognize that long range, sustainable planning is essential to accommodate growth, sustain economic development, protect public health and safety and secure the viability of the military mission and commend DOD for taking steps to engage in these efforts

4. The Department of Defense should proactively engage with the Western Governors and share key information on issues that impede the military mission changes, as appropriate.
5. The DoD through the Western Regional Partnership should strengthen its support of WGA as it develops wildlife online planning tools that integrate appropriate federal, tribal, state and other available data sources for use in regional planning. WRP should ensure that crucial wildlife habitat and corridors information developed by the states is used to inform decisions on military land.
6. Western Governors and DoD should work together on ways to develop additional energy resources, while limiting impacts to the military mission. Similarly, Governors should encourage DoD to engage in energy projects as early as possible utilizing the Energy Siting Clearinghouse as identified in Section 358 of the National Defense Authorization Act. States, project proponents and developers are strongly encouraged to provide the DoD early notification and coordination opportunities on renewable energy (wind, solar and geothermal and their associated infrastructure) and transmission infrastructure to ensure military missions are not negatively impacted.

C. GOVERNORS' MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE

1. The Western Governors direct WGA staff to work with the Department of Defense to implement the policies contained in this resolution.
2. WGA and DOD should develop a long-term plan for how to best support and work together on areas of common interest, including identifying and funding key projects of mutual benefit that also reflects the particular needs and policy objectives of individual states.
3. This policy resolution shall be specifically conveyed to the President of the United States, the Secretaries of Defense, Energy and Interior and the appropriate members and committees of Congress.
4. The Western Governors' Association shall post this resolution to its Web site to be referenced and transmitted as necessary.

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