

Resolution #2026-9

SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS IN MONTANA

BACKGROUND

Federal military operations in Montana are critical to national defense and represent a significant component of the state's economy and community stability. Key military assets include Malmstrom Air Force Base, Fort Harrison, the Limestone Hills Training Area, the Powder River Training Complex, and Montana Army and Air National Guard units located throughout the state.

Malmstrom Air Force Base generates approximately \$444 million annually in economic impact, including more than \$285 million in payroll and approximately \$45 million in annual expenditures, supporting nearly 3,900 personnel and their families. This installation plays a central role in Montana's economy through payroll, contracting, and local procurement.

The Malmstrom missile complex spans approximately 13,800 square miles and includes 150 intercontinental ballistic missile launch facilities, a configuration that has remained consistent for decades and underscores the enduring strategic importance of this installation to national defense. The complex includes more than 6,000 miles of paved and unpaved roads supporting mission-critical operations.

Military operations place unique demands on Montana's transportation infrastructure, particularly in areas supporting missile fields and training ranges. Through programs such as the Defense Access Roads (DAR) Program, the U.S. Department of War partners with state and local governments to fund improvements to public roadways impacted by military activities. These investments are targeted, mission-driven, and essential to maintaining operational readiness.

Malmstrom is one of three intercontinental ballistic missile bases in the United States and is slated to receive the next-generation LGM-35A Sentinel Program. This multi-decade modernization effort—estimated to exceed \$100 billion nationally—will bring significant long-term infrastructure investment and economic activity to Montana.

In addition to active-duty installations, the Montana National Guard—through the Montana Department of Military Affairs—plays a critical dual federal and state role in national defense, emergency response, and community support. Guard operations are funded primarily through federal resources, with state funding supporting facilities, maintenance, and administrative functions necessary to sustain readiness.

Date

The Montana National Guard generates approximately \$240 million annually in economic impact statewide, driven largely by federal payroll, operations, construction, and facility investments in communities across Montana. These activities support jobs, local businesses, and economic stability in both urban and rural communities.

More broadly, Department of War activities contribute approximately \$800 million annually in defense spending in Montana, reinforcing the importance of military operations to the state's overall economic health.

The U.S. Department of War actively partners with state and local governments to enhance military readiness and quality of life for service members and their families. Programs such as the Defense Community Infrastructure Program support infrastructure improvements benefiting both installations and surrounding communities. Key priorities include housing availability, childcare access, workforce development, spousal employment, and professional license reciprocity.

Montana's support for the military is also reflected in its veteran community. Montana has the third-highest veteran density in the United States, with veterans comprising approximately 9 percent of the state's population. Veterans and military families are deeply woven into the economic and civic life of communities across Montana. Support for veterans and their families is a bipartisan priority and is reflected not only in public policy, but also in the many Montana businesses that provide military and veteran discounts and other forms of recognition.

At the same time, federal realignment decisions, evolving mission requirements, and budget pressures present ongoing risks to military missions and installations. Incompatible development and encroachment near training ranges and operational areas can also impact long-term mission viability. Montana has opportunities to strengthen its position through proactive partnerships, infrastructure investment, and support for defense-related industries.

ACTION

Montana's military installations, training areas, and defense-related industries play a critical role in national security, the state's economy, workforce, and community vitality. Many service members choose to remain in the state after their military careers and as veterans become business owners, community leaders, and active residents. Supporting military missions, service members, veterans, and their families strengthens local economies, enhances community quality of life, reinforces military readiness, and recognizes the sacrifices made in service to our nation. To further these benefits and promote broader awareness and appreciation of military service and sacrifice, MLCT supports the following policies and those that preserve local governments'

Date

authority to determine how best to serve all members of their communities and sustain municipal services.

1. Protect and enhance existing military missions and installations in Montana;
2. Prevent incompatible development and encroachment near military installations and training areas;
3. Support modernization efforts, including the LGM-35A Sentinel Program and associated infrastructure investments;
4. Strengthen partnerships between military installations and local communities, including participation in federal programs such as the Defense Community Infrastructure Program and the Defense Access Roads (DAR) Program;
5. Advocate for policies that improve quality of life for military personnel and their families, including housing, childcare, workforce opportunities, and professional licensing;
6. Recognize and support veterans, service members, and military and veteran families as integral contributors to Montana's economic, civic, and community life to encourage broader awareness and appreciation of their service and sacrifice; and,
7. Promote growth in Montana's defense-related industries and economic development opportunities.