

STATE *of* CONNECTICUT
OFFICE *of* MILITARY AFFAIRS
(OMA)

Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2024-2025



Robert T. Ross
Executive Director

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I. Introduction

For its legendary support in the Revolutionary War, President George Washington called Connecticut the “*Provisions State*.” From the beginning of America’s democracy, Connecticut has played a vital role in producing the diverse and highest quality human and physical resources for our nation’s defense.

Units of the Connecticut National Guard are dispersed in armories and other facilities across the State. Throughout its long history, dating back to colonial militias, Guard units have responded to state and national emergencies and performed combat operations worldwide. The Connecticut National Guard is headquartered next to the State Capitol in Hartford, in the massive State Armory and Arsenal building dedicated by President William H. Taft in 1909.

In 1794, after the Continental Congress decided to create a United States Navy, an expedition sailed from New London to retrieve live oak, the hardest wood available, to build America’s first warships at different shipyards along the East Coast. These ships were not modified merchant vessels. They were designed from the keel up to be warships. One of them, the *USS Constitution*, remains the oldest commissioned warship in the world.

The Navy base in Groton was originally a Naval Yard and Storage Depot, established in 1868. It was built on land donated by the people of Connecticut. The State Legislature provided \$15,000, and the City of New London appropriated \$75,000 to purchase land on the east bank of the Thames River in the New London harbor. In 1916, the base was designated the nation’s first Naval Submarine Base (SUBASE) and home of the Submarine School.

The first land-based campus of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy was established at Fort Trumbull in 1910 and then moved to land donated by the City of New London in 1915. The Coast Guard Academy is the single officer accession source of all commissioned officers for the U.S. Coast Guard. Today, the men and women of the

Coast Guard serve at stations ashore and aboard cutters deployed throughout the U.S. and in every ocean.

Since the first days of our democracy, Connecticut’s defense manufacturing industry has continued without interruption. The ships, submarines, aircraft, jet engines, helicopters, firearms, and advanced weapon systems built in Connecticut reflect our state’s continuous innovation and highly skilled workforce. Connecticut’s defense industry and military bases produce billions of dollars in economic activity throughout the state, in large and small businesses in virtually every municipality.

Overview of OMA

The Office of Military Affairs (OMA) was established by Connecticut General Statute Section 32-58b in 2007. Accordingly, “the Office of Military Affairs shall promote and coordinate state-wide activities that enhance the quality of life of all branches of military personnel and their families and to expand the military and homeland security presence in this state.”

Mission of OMA

- Coordinate efforts to prevent the closure or downsizing of the SUBASE in Groton (SUBASE).
- Support Connecticut’s servicemembers and military families to enhance their quality of life throughout the state.
- Advocate for Connecticut’s defense industry, a significant component of the state’s economy and an engine of innovation and quality production for the U.S. Armed Forces.
- Encourage the retention of established military and defense industry missions and the relocation of new ones to the state.
- Serve as liaison to the Connecticut congressional delegation on defense and military issues.

Structure and Organization

As directed in statute, OMA is established within the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) for administrative purposes only. OMA and DECD are co-located at 450 Columbus Boulevard in Hartford, Connecticut.

The office is minimally staffed with a full-time Executive Director, designated as a department head in the executive branch, reporting directly to the Office of the Governor. The Executive Director is supported by DECD staff members and interns who provide support for OMA in various functions including, but not limited to, office administration, public communications, financial management, legal counsel, information technology, economic research, and legislative affairs.

OMA is an active member of the National Association of Defense Communities (ADC), a Washington-based organization representing states and communities nationwide that host military installations. OMA Executive Director Bob Ross was elected to the ADC Board of Directors and served as President from 2021 to 2023. His many contributions to the organization include participation in numerous thought-leading programs in national and regional forums.

II. Key Defense Issues for the Nation and State

National Security/Foreign Policy Issues

The Rise of Drone Warfare: Russia's war against Ukraine has continued with no end in sight. The main difference in 2024 was drone warfare, by both Ukraine and Russia. In Ukraine, drones were virtually non-existent before Russia's attack in February 2022. But by the end of 2024, President Volodymyr Zelensky said that Ukraine was capable of producing drones 4 million annually. In October, he announced that Ukraine would produce 1.5 million

drones by the end of 2024. In 2023, Ukraine produced some 300,000 in the entire year.

Russia is also boosting the manufacturing of drones. It produced approximately 1.4 million drones throughout 2024. "This year, the production of drones is planned to increase significantly," Russian President Vladimir Putin said. According to information from Ukraine's air force, Moscow deployed 2,576 drones during November of 2024.

In January 2025, the *Stars and Stripes* reported that the Navy defended against almost 400 attack drones in the Red Sea since Iranian-backed Houthi militants began their assault on commercial and military ships in January 2024. Navy forces fired more than 200 missiles against those attacks since the Houthis started their attacks in November 2023.

Separately, the *New York Times* reported in October 2025 that the U.S. military has started operating surveillance drones over the Gaza Strip as part of an effort to ensure that both Israel and Hamas adhere to a fragile cease-fire agreement. The drones have been used to monitor ground activity in Gaza.

In an interesting historic note, in 1954 British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery predicted that drones – although not that name – would be used in warfare. In an address to the Royal United Services Institute, Montgomery predicted that airpower would become the main factor in war, that large surface vessels would become obsolete, and that unmanned aerial systems – known now as drones – would become ubiquitous. He said these aircraft would "remain in the skies for prolonged periods and all weathers," adding, "That time is not yet, but it will come." Montgomery's prediction was reported in the *Military Times*.

Ukraine: According to the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ), China is a key supplier of components used by Russia to manufacture drones and other weapons for its war against Ukraine. China insists that it does not provide weapons to Russia, but it continues to allow exports of dual-use goods – items with both military and civilian applications. The WSJ reports indicate that Russian defense-linked firms have imported millions of drone motors and parts from Chinese companies, which are used in attacks on Ukrainian cities and troops. A report from Ukraine’s Kyiv’s Center for Defense Reforms reported that in 2024 Russia purchased more than 3.3 million motors from a Chinese company. Their end user was Rustakt LLC, a Moscow-based manufacturer of drones.

Separately, the *Los Angeles Times* has reported that in 2025 Ukraine received American-made Patriot air defense systems to counter drones and other weapons. Germany has given Ukraine more Patriot systems from its own armed forces more than any other country, the German Defense Ministry has said.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been coordinating regular deliveries of large weapons to Ukraine. European allies and Canada are buying much of the equipment from the United States, which has greater stocks of military materiel, and more effective weapons. The Trump administration is not directly providing arms to Ukraine.

Middle East: On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas militants streamed across the border from Gaza into southern Israel, killing about 1,200 young Israelis and kidnapping some 250 others. The next day Israel declared war on Hamas. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that Israel will campaign in Gaza until there is “total victory,” the complete surrender or elimination of Hamas, and the return of all Israeli hostages. In 2023 and all of 2024, Israel’s constant

invasion and bombardment destroyed much of Gaza’s critical infrastructure and housing.

At the end of 2024 and in 2025, some two million people were still living in Gaza. They needed urgent rebuilding of houses, hospitals, electricity infrastructures, and schools. Israel’s military has denied destroying infrastructure, saying it is only targeting Hamas and other militant groups moving about in civilian environments. In December 2024, an Israeli government spokesman denied claims that Israel intended to empty Gaza of Palestinians as “outrageous and false accusations.” In 2024, 41,800 Palestinians have been killed, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Much of the death was apparently due to the relentless bombing by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

The Israeli-Gaza war continued into 2025. But in October 2025, the United States -- along with Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey -- was able to make a truce between Israel and Hamas. In addition, Hamas returned the 20 living hostages it was holding, in exchange for some 2,000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails. It is hoped in the White House that the ceasefire continues and the truce survives.

Climate Change: In January 2025 the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) confirmed that 2024 was the warmest year on record. The past ten years have all been in the Top Ten – an extraordinary streak of record-breaking temperatures. The WMO provides a temperature assessment based on various sources of data to support international climate, and information for the United Nations (UN) Climate Change negotiating process. Among the data sources are the European Center for Medium Range Weather Forecasts, Japan Meteorological Agency, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

“Climate history is playing out before our eyes,” said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo. “We’ve had not just one or two record-breaking years, but a full ten-year series. This has been accompanied by devastating and extreme weather, rising sea levels and melting ice, all powered by record-breaking greenhouse gas levels due to human activities.

“Today’s [January 10, 2025] assessment from the World Meteorological Organization proves yet again – global heating is a cold, hard fact,” said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. “Individual years pushing past the 1.5-degree limit do not mean the long-term goal is shot. It means we need to fight even harder to get on track. Blazing temperatures in 2024 require trail-blazing climate action in 2025. There’s still time to avoid the worst of climate catastrophe. But leaders must act – now,” he said.

The past 10 years -- 2015-2024 -- are the ten warmest years on record. 2024 saw exceptional land and sea surface temperatures and ocean heat. Climate change is of particular importance to Navy bases on or near water, such as SUBASE in Connecticut. Although the SUBASE is on the Thames River, it is not on the coastline and benefits from some protection by Long Island and the Long Island Sound.

Space Race. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, here are some of the key highlights in space exploration in 2024: Japan landed a Smart Lander for Investigating the Moon (SLIM) on a lunar crater in January and transmitted data to earth for three months; China sent a mission that brought back some soil samples from the far side of the moon; NASA’s Perseverance rover found possible evidence of microbial life on Mars, and a joint European Union-Japan mission photographed the south pole of Mercury.

However, not everything went well. Boeing’s Starliner project delivered two astronauts to the International Space Station in June 2024 for what was supposed to be a two-month event. But technical problems prevented them from coming back until March 18, 2025. Astronauts Barry Wilmore and Sunita Williams returned to earth after a long delay of 286 days in space. They completed their mission in a SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule, which docked with the Space Station and then splashed down off the coast of Florida.

Separately, in May of 2024 U.S. officials accused Russia of placing a nuclear space-based anti-satellite weapon in space. Meanwhile, China hides the number of military satellites it has in space. The few international agreements about space operations do little to constrain the militarization of space. The United States continues to urge countries to sign the Artemis Accords, which seek to prevent the militarization of space exploration. At the end of 2024 fifty-two countries were signatories. But the list did not include China or Russia.

Connecticut Defense Funding

Connecticut did well in the FY 2025 defense authorization and appropriations bills. The former – the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) – was passed by Congress on Dec. 18, 2024, and signed into law on Dec. 23, 2024, by the then-President Joe Biden.

The FY 2025 Defense Appropriations Bill was enacted in several ways. According to the Congressional Research Service, Congress enacted the bill through two short-term continuing resolutions (CR) and one full-year CR (Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025). It summarized the DOD programs, projects, and activities under the jurisdiction of the House and Senate Committees of Appropriations.

For example, the FY 2025 Defense Appropriations Bill enacted by the Senate Appropriations Committee includes \$37B, \$3.4B above the budget request by President Biden. It included funds for 1 Columbia-class submarine and 1 Virginia-class submarine. The bill included an additional \$357M for a second Virginia-class submarine, and \$1.8B above the budget request for prior year ships including Virginia-class submarines.

When Congress passed the NDAA, Connecticut Senator Richard Blumenthal, who is on the Senate Armed Services Committee, stated the following: “This landmark bipartisan defense measure bolsters our national security and boosts Connecticut’s economy. We’re redoubling our nation’s commitments to servicemen and women with significant pay raises and programs and keeping the faith with our allies and our own defense needs through important investments in subs, ships, artillery, and aircraft to ensure the security of the American people. This bill makes critical investments in advanced technologies and weapon platforms and the talented workforce that build them in Connecticut, showing our state’s central role in our nation’s defense efforts.”

Rep. Joe Courtney of Connecticut, a member of the House Armed Services Committee and Ranking Member of the Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, worked on reversing the Navy’s request to cut procurement of a Virginia-class submarine and worked for wage increases for shipbuilders at Electric Boat in Connecticut and Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia.

Rep. Courtney said the bill authorizes funding for two Virginia-class submarines and “extends new latitude to shipbuilders to increase wages for frontline shipyard workers.”

He also said the bill “provides greater housing assistance and day care support for all servicemembers. ...and these provisions are

sorely needed and welcomed among the thousands of submariners and their families in eastern Connecticut, as well as residents who serve in other branches of the military.”

Following are key items contained in the FY 2025 NDAA:

- 14.5% pay raise for junior enlisted servicemembers and 4.5% basic pay increase for all other servicemembers.
- Funds for childcare assistance programs to eliminate fee assistance wait lists for eligible families.
- Ensures that pay for childcare staff at DOD childcare centers is competitive with private industry to better recruit and retain DOD childcare personnel.
- \$3.97B for one Virginia-class submarine, with incremental funding authority for a second boat and \$357M for additional material and support.
- Authority for the Navy to provide assistance for the shipyards to increase wages for workers, to improve recruitment and retention for shipbuilders.
- Over \$1.63B in research and development for future submarine capabilities, critical for sustaining the health of the design and engineering workforce at Electric Boat.
- \$2.5M above the FY 2025 budget request, to support Navy partnerships with academic institutions conducting research on undersea capabilities, such as the National Institute for Undersea Vehicle Technology (NIUVT) at the University of Connecticut.
- \$709M for 24 UH-60M Black Hawks, made at Sikorsky.
- \$2.07B for 20 CH-53Ks, built at Sikorsky.

- Provision to provide multiyear procurement authority for the CH-53K program to provide industrial base stability for the workforce at Sikorsky.
- \$527M for F135 Engine Core Upgrade development across Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps, a key engineering program for the F-35 engine underway at Pratt & Whitney.

Separately, on Sept. 26, 2025, Sikorsky, in Stratford, CT, received a \$10.85B contract from the Navy to build up to a maximum of 99 CH-53K “King Stallion” helicopters for the Marine Corps over five years. “This award reflects trust and confidence in Sikorsky to deliver these technologically advanced, heavy-lift helicopters that will revolutionize the Marine Corps’ operational capabilities by adding unrivaled power, performance, survivability, and dependability to the fleet,” said Rich Benton, Sikorsky vice president and general manager.

Also, on Feb. 7, 2025, Rep. Courtney, Co-Chair of the Friends of Australia Caucus, issued a statement after meeting with Australia’s Defense Minister Richard Marles. They discussed Congress’s commitment to strengthen the U.S.-Australia alliance and Australia’s \$500 million investment into the U.S. submarine industrial base.

“Deputy Prime Minister Marles’s visit to Washington demonstrates enduring commitment to strengthening our two nation’s alliance. We discussed Australia’s newly announced \$500 million into the U.S. submarine industrial base, which was made possible by a law the Friends of Australia Caucus championed in the 2024 annual defense bill.

“Today’s payment strengthened the ties of the two nations and the AUKUS agreement, ensuring the mission will endure and the U.S. submarine industrial base can meet the demands of the security

agreement. At every step of the way Australia has demonstrated AUKUS is a true partnership that the U.S. benefits from as much as our partners and allies in the region,” Courtney said.

AUKUS is the submarine-related working group of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The partnership among the three countries was announced in 2021; it enables Australia to have nuclear-powered submarines. The AUKUS agreement is that Australia will buy up to five Virginia-class submarines. In the future, submarines will be built in Australia and the UK, with technology and support from the United States. This marks the first time the U.S. has shared its nuclear power technology with any other government.

Defense Contracts

As reported on page 10, Connecticut had a good year in 2024, with \$14.1B in prime contracts.

As usual, the large contracts went to Electric Boat (EB), Pratt & Whitney (P&W), and Sikorsky. For example, in May 2024 P&W had contracts of \$303M and \$380M. Things were quiet until August, when EB received a contract of \$1.3B from the Navy. Then in September, the end of the fiscal year, P&W and Sikorsky did very well. P&W received a contract for \$1.3B, another contract for \$405.4M, and a third contract for \$111.9M. Also in September, Sikorsky received 22 contracts, and 18 of them were for the CH-53K “King Stallion” heavy lift helicopter for the Marine Corps; the amount for the 22 contracts was \$840M. October had contracts with a total of \$3.4B and December closed out with contracts of \$2.8B. The contracts in September, October, and December amounted to \$9.1B, about two-thirds of the year’s \$14.1B in defense contracts.

Electric Boat

A subsidiary of General Dynamics, Electric Boat (EB) was founded in 1899. Its facilities include a huge shipyard in Groton, CT, a hull fabrication and outfitting facility in Quonset Point in Rhode Island, and a design and engineering facility in New London, CT.

EB president Kevin Graney retired at the end of 2024. Graney joined General Dynamics in 1995 and served in a variety of leadership roles. He became EB president in 2019. Graney was succeeded by Mark Rayha, who had served as senior vice president and chief operating officer. Rayha joined General Dynamics in 1989. He joined EB in 2020 and served as chief operating officer from 2021.

As the EB president did each year, Rayha delivered the annual legislative briefings to congressional delegations and local leaders in Connecticut and Rhode Island on Feb. 3, 2025.

Rayha stated that the Columbia-class submarine continues to be the Navy's number one strategic priority. "These ballistic missile submarines will replace the Ohio class and serve as the backbone of our nation's strategic deterrent well into the 2080s," he said. "Lead ship District of Columbia (SSBN 826) is 53% complete while the second, Wisconsin (SSBN 827), is 14% finished," he added. He said EB will build and deliver 12 Columbia-class ships through 2040.

On hiring, Rayha said that EB had added over 4,100 new workers in 2024. About 56% were in operations and the remaining 44% were engineers, designers, and those in other support functions. "This year, we expect to welcome an additional 3,000 employees to our team, which will make 2025 another significant year of hiring," he said.

Of the federal funding increases, Rep. Courtney said, "these investments go directly towards helping attract and train workers at

shipyards and suppliers, provide suppliers with upgraded equipment to increase their capacity, expand shipyard infrastructure, and introduce 21st century technology to the submarine manufacturing process."

Pratt & Whitney

P&W, a subsidiary of RTX (Raytheon), on July 22, 2025, celebrated 100 years since being incorporated in military and commercial aviation with its R-1340 Wasp radial engine.

"Since our founding in 1925, the people of Pratt & Whitney have designed, built, and supported the safest, most dependable engines in aerospace, united by a common purpose: connecting people, growing economies and defending freedom," said Shane Eddy, P&W president. "Our 45,000 employees worldwide work every day to uphold our 100-year legacy of safety, innovation and dependable engines. The words 'dependable engines' are literally stamped on every engine we produce – it's a mission our entire team lives by and a commitment to our customers."

P&W's founder, Frederick B. Rentschler, saw the potential of a lightweight, air-cooled, radial engine to enable levels of power and reliability for aviation. By October 1926, P&W's first 425-horsepower R-1340 Wasp engine had got the approval of the U.S. Navy, which ordered 200 engines to power its early carrier-based aircraft. This paved the way for the company's rapid growth.

With the development of powerful variants, Wasp engines were made for hundreds of aircraft types during the early-to-mid 20th century. The engine also played a vital role in enabling Allied victory in the skies during World War II, when more than 363,000 engines were produced.

After the war the jet age set in. P&W moved from its production of radial engine development by leading another innovation by producing one of the world's first twin-spool gas turbine engines. The J57 engine and its commercial equivalent, the JT3C, powered the Boeing B-52 Stratofortress and the 707 and DC-8 airliners. This ushered in a new era of commercial air travel. It also laid the foundation for gas turbine technology, which has continued ever since.

Today, the P&W F135 engine is the safest, most capable, and reliable fighter engine, powering the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II. P&W Canada plays a leading role in powering a wide array of regional and business aviation aircraft. It developed and certified more than 200 engine types since the introduction of the PT6 turboprop engine in 1963.

As part of their centennial celebration this year, P&W is engaging its employees with a traveling exhibit visiting 11 of its facilities around the world. It can also be experienced online. Also, a historical marker has been unveiled at the site of P&W's original headquarters in Hartford, CT. P&W's headquarters is now in East Hartford.

As stated above, P&W sees the F-35 engine as the most advanced in the world. Building on that engine is the F125 Engine Core Upgrade (ECU). On Sept. 30, 2024, P&W received a contract from the Navy of \$1.3B to continue work on the ECU. More than 700 engineers and program managers are working full-time on the ECU. As of September 2024, P&W delivered more than 1,200 F135 production engines, with more than 900,000 engine flight hours recorded. The F135 ECU will be incorporated into F-35s at the point of production or retrofitted at one of the F135 depot sustainment facilities around the world.

Sikorsky

Sikorsky is a subsidiary of Lockheed Martin. Based in Stratford, CT, it was founded by Igor Sikorsky, a Russian-American aviation pioneer, in 1923. It was one of the first companies to manufacture helicopters for civilian and military use.

On Sept. 18, 2025, the Sikorsky company was saddened to learn of the death of Sergei Sikorsky at the age of 100. He was the son of Igor.

"The entire team – past and present – at Sikorsky and Lockheed Martin mourn the passing of a remarkable man, a link to the golden age of aviation who meant so much to the success of our business," said Rich Benton, Sikorsky vice president and general manager. "Sergei will be greatly missed."

A military veteran, Sergei Sikorsky joined the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II. He was a member of the Helicopter Development Unit.

Sergei Sikorsky had a 41-year career with the Sikorsky company. He began his career in international marketing and sales in 1951. He returned to the United States in 1976 when the Black Hawk helicopter was starting to be produced. He became vice president in Stratford, overseeing the company's co-production programs. Later he took on marketing and special projects until he retired in 1992.

Even in retirement Mr. Sikorsky remained active with the company. He was a goodwill ambassador at major trade shows and other events where he would sign autographs, speak about his family's legacy, and highlight his passion for helicopters and how they save lives around the world.

The aircraft hangar at Sikorsky's Stratford headquarters was dedicated to the *Sergei I. Sikorsky Flight Center* in 2019. Sergei said it was his life's "single greatest honor."

Separately, on Aug. 19, 2024, the Sikorsky company turned over to the U.S. Marine Corps the 23rd and last of the VH-92A presidential helicopters built by Sikorsky. It marked a significant milestone for the company since its aircraft have flown for every president since 1957.

"Once again Sikorsky's highly skilled employees have shown their ability to innovate, manufacture, and deliver these next-generation VH-92A presidential helicopters that will be operating worldwide in support of presidential missions well into the future," said Mr. Benton.

Also, as stated before, on Sept. 26, 2025, Sikorsky received a \$10.85B contract from the Navy to build a maximum of 99 CH-53K "King Stallion" helicopters for the Marine Corps over five years. It's the largest quantity order to date for the aircraft.

At the time of the contract award Sikorsky had delivered 20 CH-53K helicopters to the Marine Corps. An additional 63 helicopters have been in various stages of production and assembly.

Clearly, Connecticut-based companies have tremendous national and international reach, shaping defense manufacturing on a global scale.



Marine Helicopter Squadron One (HMX-1) performs test flights of the new VH-92A over the south lawn of the White House in Washington DC. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Hunter Helis)

III. Connecticut Defense Industry Outlook

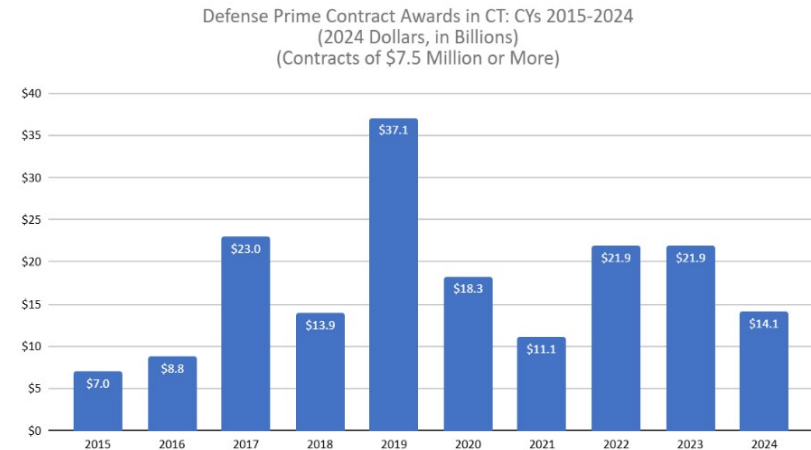
As stated earlier, the Connecticut defense industrial base had a good \$14.1 billion in prime contracts in calendar year 2024.

Although it was good, this amount is fairly conservative. It is derived from DOD's daily announcement of contract awards. The contract announcements apply only to prime contracts with a value of \$7.5 million or more. Thousands of DOD prime contracts with a value less than \$7.5M are not included.

Connecticut's OMA has closely tracked defense contracts from DOD's daily contract listings ever since it was established in 2007. Since that time the state's annual defense contracts have often been in the range of \$7-14B. However, in the past years they have been far above that range. This has mainly due to (1) EB's construction of two Virginia-class submarines each year and the start of Columbia-class submarines; (2) P&W making substantial numbers of engines for the F-35 aircraft, and sustainment of this and other military engines; (3) Sikorsky's continued production and maintenance of its Black Hawk helicopters and, more recently, the production of its CH-53 King Stallion helicopters.

Trend in Prior Year Defense Contract

Figure 1 shows annual amounts of DOD prime contract awards of \$7.5M or more for calendar years 2015 through 2024. Four of those years have been more than \$20B. In 2015 and 2016 the contracts dropped to lower levels of \$7.0B and \$8.8B, respectively. But in 2017 the Connecticut defense contracts zoomed to \$23.0B. It was mainly due to a \$6.7B contract to P&W for the sustainment through 2025 for the F-119 engine used in the Air Force's F-22 Raptor jet fighter.



Source: Department of Defense, Connecticut Office of Military Affairs

Figure 1

The 2018 amount dropped to \$13.9B. But it skyrocketed to \$37.1B in 2019, by far the highest amount since OMA has been tracking defense contracts since 2007. It was mainly the result of a \$22.2B single contract awarded to EB in December of 2019, the Navy's largest single contract ever awarded. The contract was for nine Virginia-class submarines. Eight of them have an 84-foot extension of the hull known as Virginia Payload Module, which increases the submarine's missile capacity.

The 2020 amount of \$18.3B was the fourth highest since 2007. However, the 2022 and 2023 amounts of \$21.9 each are tied for the four highest amounts, according to OMA's tracking of calendar year DOD contracts.

With the significantly high defense contracts in 2017, 2019, 2022 and 2023, Figure 1 may give the impression of instability in Connecticut's defense industrial base. But that is not the case.

The total amount of contracts announced by DOD are very often greater than the amounts obligated, that is, paid to the contractor when the contracts are awarded. Rather, the contract amounts are very often spread out over many years. This is the case for very large contracts.

For example, on Sept. 4, 2024, a contract in the amount of \$405.4M was awarded to P&W for the production and delivery of the F135 propulsion system in support of the Joint Strike Fighter for the Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, and non-Department of Defense participants. However, no funds were obligated at the time of the award. Rather, funds were to be obligated when individual orders were issued.

Also, on Sept. 30, 2024, P&W received a contract of \$1.3B for engine test preparation, air system integration, rig testing, product support planning in support of the maturation of the F135 Engine Core Upgrade Propulsion System. At the time of the award \$217.5M was obligated. The remaining funds will come during the time the work is expected to be completed in March 2028.

In sum, the amounts of procurement funds from very large defense contracts are often spread over long periods of time. This provides stability and predictability for Connecticut's defense industrial base. The stability is prominent in years with modest contract awards.

Suppliers to Leading Contractors

With construction of Columbia-class submarines underway and the continued work on Virginia-class submarines, the future seems very good for Connecticut's submarine industrial base. But there has been a significant challenge for suppliers in the state and elsewhere to keep up with the pace of construction.

EB and its submarine construction counterpart, Huntington Ingalls's Newport News Shipbuilding, award hundreds of millions of dollars in sub-contracts to suppliers every year. It's hard to track such spending. However, the Submarine Industrial Base Council in Washington, DC, compiles amounts spent or contracted to submarine suppliers for the main submarine programs. More than 5,000 companies nationwide make up the submarine industrial base. The Council also estimates that there are thousands of additional lower-tier suppliers across the country.

In February 2025 the Council issued a state-by-state report on sub-contracts. It reported that sub-contracts were awarded to 2,646 first-tier known submarine industrial base suppliers. The total amount was \$34.5B spent on contracting submarine suppliers over last five years. The Council reports that the amount supports over 90,000 jobs in the United States. The amount does not include funding for the two submarine suppliers: EB and Newport News Shipbuilding. This amount is significantly higher than a similar report issued in February 2024: \$31.7B.

For Connecticut, the total amount of purchase awards over the last five years was approximately \$1.4B, with 333 submarine industrial base suppliers, as compiled by the Council in its February 2025 report. Among products made by small Connecticut companies in past years have been specialized components and materials such as electronic control equipment, software development, control valves, pipe fittings, oxygen generators, specialty alloys, high speed bearings, and specialty castings and forgings. Many of these products are produced by highly skilled and well-paid workers.

Connecticut's current \$1.4B cost in submarine products is a substantial increase since a 2020 survey from the Submarine Industrial Base Council, which showed Connecticut with \$864.2M.

This substantial increase over the last five years is due to the Virginia-class, and now Columbia-class, construction requirements.

The Council’s 2025 report shows that the Nutmeg state has 333 first-tier submarine industrial base suppliers, plus an unknown number of other supplier companies. While Connecticut is a major submarine supplier state, it comes in 7th in supplier sub-contract amounts over the past five years at \$1.3B, according to the Council’s report. This year California came in 1st place with 5.9B, followed by Virginia at 4.1B and Pennsylvania 3rd at 4.0B.

See Table 1 below, listing the top 10 submarine supplier states by dollar amounts over the past five years as compiled by the Council.

**Top U.S. Submarine Supplier States
(By Dollar Amounts, 2020-2025)**

1. California	\$5.9B
2. Virginia	\$4.1B
3. Pennsylvania	\$4.0B
4. Ohio	\$2.1B
5. Wisconsin	\$2.0B
6. Massachusetts	\$1.9B
7. <u>Connecticut</u>	\$1.3B
8. New York	\$1.1B
9. Texas	\$1.09B
10. New Jersey	\$1.07

Table 1

Interestingly, some of the top 10 sub-contract states increased their amounts over the past year. For example, California had \$4.8B in submarine contracts in 2024. It increased to \$5.9B in the Council’s 2025 findings. Pennsylvania went from \$3.0B to \$4.0B in the 2025

Council report. These indicate that the increased demand for submarine components is nationwide.

By far Connecticut has the greatest number of submarine suppliers, with 333. It’s followed by Virginia with 284 and Massachusetts at 234. Table 2 below shows Connecticut far above. Interestingly, while some of these states have large populations – California, Pennsylvania, New York, Texas – three of the top 10 sub-supplier states are in New England: Rhode Island with 104, along with Connecticut and Massachusetts.

**Top U.S. Submarine Supplier States
(By Number of Suppliers, 2025)**

1. <u>Connecticut</u>	333
2. Virginia	284
3. Massachusetts	234
4. Pennsylvania	180
5. California	177
6. New York	135
7. Rhode Island	104
8. New Jersey	102
9. Ohio	101
10. Texas	93

Table 2

Overall, there are some 400 known small-to-medium supply companies in Connecticut, with thousands more in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and in other states nationwide. They provide products not only for submarines but for all three of DOD’s Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM): Electric Boat, Pratt & Whitney, and Sikorsky.

Connecticut's Ranking in Defense Spending

The most recent comprehensive analysis of state-by-state defense spending is *Defense Spending by State, Fiscal Year 2024*. It was released on Nov. 24, 2025, by DOD's Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC). The report is based on research done between March and September 2025. It is drawn from an array of sources, including DOD's Defense Manpower Data Center and USAspending.gov, which is managed by the Department of the Treasury.

Connecticut did well in the rankings, particularly with its relatively small population of 3.6 million compared to other states with much larger populations and many more military bases. It is ranked 7th in total defense spending, with \$19.7B.

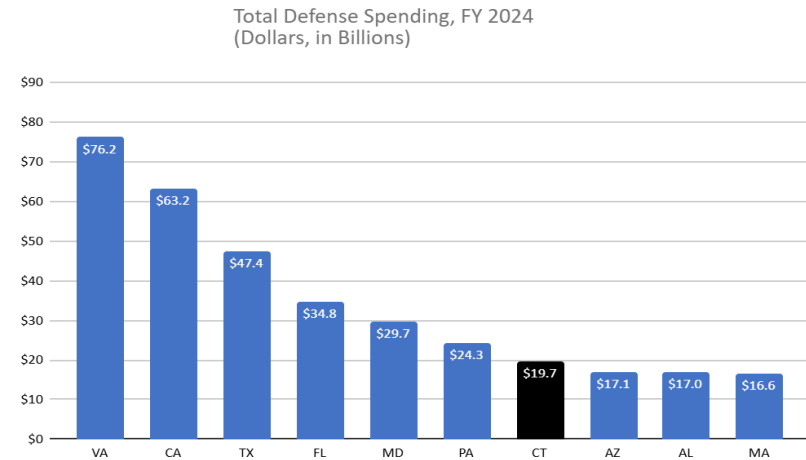
In defense spending as a percentage of state Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Connecticut came in 6th place with a percentage of 5.4%.

In the important category of defense *contract* spending, Connecticut again is ranked as 7th, with \$18.7B. Moreover, it was ranked behind the large states of Virginia, California, and Texas. These three states have numerous military bases, but Connecticut has only one major military base, the SUBASE in Groton.

On the other hand, Connecticut is ranked much lower in defense *personnel* spending, that is, salaries paid to active duty, National Guard, and reserve personnel in a state, along with civilian DOD employees. Again, this category is dominated by states with many large military bases such as Virginia, California, and Texas. Not surprisingly, Connecticut came in 32nd with personnel spending.

Figure 2 below shows the ranking for total defense spending, which includes defense contracts and personnel. As stated above,

Connecticut comes in 7th with \$19.7B, below Pennsylvania with \$24.3B. The top four states are consistently far above Connecticut because of their large amounts of defense contracts and military bases: Virginia (\$76.2B), California (\$63.2B), Texas (\$47.4B), and Florida (\$34.8B).



Source: DOD Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation.

Figure 2

As stated above and as shown in Figure 3 below, Connecticut does well in the ranking of defense spending as a percentage of state GDP in 6th place at 5.4%. Hawaii is at the top with 10.3%, with Virginia next at 10.0%. Connecticut is right behind Maryland, which has 5.5%. Interestingly, the average for all states for defense spending as percentage GDP is 2.1%, almost one third of the GDP in Connecticut. Also, several states that exceeded the 2.1% nationwide average were not among the top recipients of total defense spending: Maine, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Alaska.

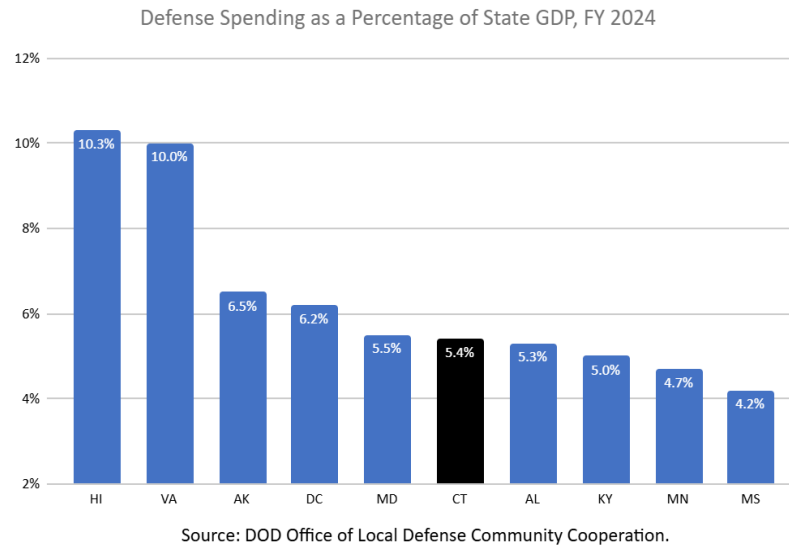


Figure 3

In defense contract spending – excluding DOD spending on personnel – CT is ranked 7th at \$18.7B. It's just behind Maryland at \$19.7B. And again, it is behind states with much larger populations and more military bases: Virginia (\$53.7B), California (\$42.9B), and Texas (\$34.0B). Also, Connecticut is behind Florida (\$25.2B), that also has a large population and numerous military bases. See Figure 4 on this page.

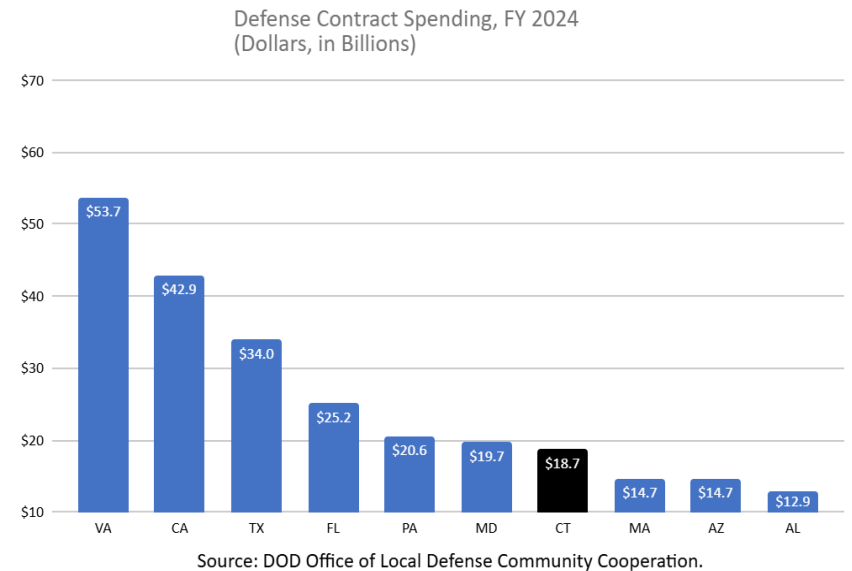


Figure 4

Another way of measuring the strength of Connecticut's defense industrial base relative to other states is by per capita spending: see Figure 5 below. According to the OLDCC report, the FY 2024 per capita defense spending in Connecticut – both for contracts and personnel spending – was \$5,373 per capita. The state was ranked 4th, only behind Virginia (\$8,646 per capita), Hawaii (\$8,254 per capita), and Alaska (\$6,132 per capita). And Hawaii has a very low population at 1.5 million, as does Alaska, 2.0 million. Also, Connecticut's per capita defense spending is almost four times higher than the average state per capita defense spending for the United States, \$1,784.

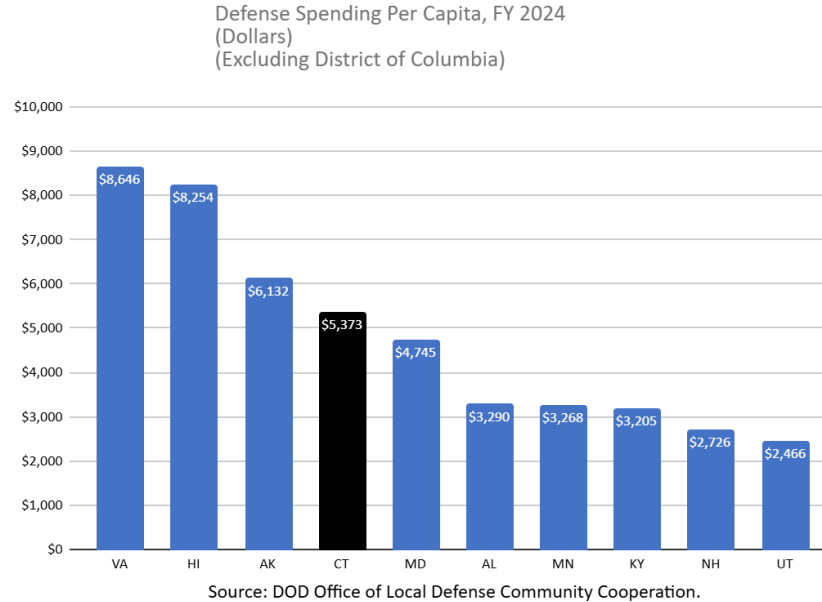


Figure 5

Finally, the OLDCC report lists the nation's top 10 defense contract spending locations in FY 2024, and spending amounts for that year. One of those locations is New London County, ranking 9th at \$8.3B, mainly no doubt due to EB and its suppliers throughout eastern Connecticut. See Table 3 on this page.

Summary

As outlined in this report, Connecticut continues to rank among the leading states nationwide for defense contracting despite the state's modest population. The information shown in this report points to a vibrant defense industrial base providing the nation with critical weapons.

Top Defense Contract Spending Locations, FY 2024

1.	Fairfax, VA	\$22.0B
2.	Los Angeles, CA	\$13.4B
3.	San Diego, CA	\$11.7B
4.	Tarrant, TX	\$10.5B
5.	St. Louis, MO	\$9.2B
6.	Pima, AZ	\$9.0B
7.	District of Columbia	\$8.7B
8.	Jefferson, KY	\$8.7B
9.	New London, CT	\$8.3B
10.	Madison, AL	\$8.3B

Table 3

Particularly in recent years – due to EB's Virginia-class and Columbia-class submarines, P&W's excellent F-35 engines, and Sikorsky's outstanding helicopters – the state's defense contracts have been growing substantially. Additionally, supplier companies have been busier than ever, especially for submarines.

Connecticut's high level of defense production will almost surely continue for many years to come. Its well-known companies will continue building the world's most sophisticated submarines, the best military jet engines, and both military and commercial helicopters used in the United States and worldwide. And small Connecticut companies, with defense-related customers, will continue to thrive. In sum, the future for the Nutmeg state's defense economy is extremely bright.

IV. U.S. Naval Submarine Base New London and the Submarine Industrial Base

Chief among the reasons for creating OMA was the very real probability that the SUBASE in Groton would be closed. Twice, it was targeted by the DOD for closure in the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. Twice, *Team Connecticut*, a group of public and private sector individuals, got organized and worked tirelessly to reverse the almost certain closure of the base. Today, the primary task of OMA is to do proactively what *Team Connecticut* had to do reactively in the BRAC rounds of 1993 and 2005. We don't want to wage this battle again.

The predictable economic catastrophe associated with the potential closure of the SUBASE is obvious to anyone familiar with southeastern Connecticut. The loss of the positive effects we realize from the base, as it generates over \$6B in annual economic impacts and over 30,000 jobs, would be devastating. The ripple effect throughout the state would simply be the reverse of what we experience today. Hundreds of small businesses deriving their business and clientele from the base would go under. Without this economic anchor, the regional economy would be severely impacted, in every industry cluster.

Creating Military Value

It is clear that the DOD will continue to make adjustments to force structure and military bases. However, another formal BRAC round is not currently requested by DOD, and Congress continues to resist this politically difficult process. Subject matter experts widely believe DOD will eventually request another BRAC round. However, future BRAC rounds may be much different from previous rounds. Previous rounds focused on cost savings and strategic basing. Future rounds will likely add new criteria, including the quality of host community public schools, state-level efforts to address

military spouse unemployment and licensure reciprocity, and relocations required due to climate change and sea level rise.

OMA will continue to closely monitor developments in BRAC requests and basing criteria. And OMA will continue to focus on developing and executing strategic initiatives to enhance the *military value* of the base in preparation for the next BRAC round whenever it comes.

In 2007, the Connecticut General Assembly authorized \$40 million for future investments in *military value* at the SUBASE to protect it from closure. Since then, state funding has been directed to several carefully selected projects. This strategy is built on the criteria used by prior BRAC commissions. It aims to assess and enhance the *base's military value*, thereby decreasing the likelihood it will be targeted for closure. By increasing *military value* in operations, infrastructure, and efficiency, we reduce the likelihood of closure because DOD simply can't afford to recreate that strategic capacity anywhere else. It's not about sunk cost. It's about current and future *military value*.

Today the SUBASE is undergoing a remarkable transformation as old infrastructure is demolished and replaced with modern capacity. People familiar with the SUBASE recognize its ongoing dramatic transformation into a modern campus of new buildings specifically designed for unique operations, specialized training and high-tech support functions associated with producing and maintaining our nation's submarine force.

Working in a close partnership with Navy officials in Connecticut and at the Pentagon, OMA has established a legal framework through which the state can transfer funds directly to the Navy for carefully selected projects at the SUBASE. Connecticut was the first state to develop such a process.

Previous state-funded projects have included the construction of new buildings to support operations and maintenance, construction

of training equipment, installation of a new high-efficiency boiler for base-wide steam utilities, and purchases of land and structures for encroachment mitigation on both the northern and southern perimeters of the base and in the Navy's area of operations within the Thames River.

The state funded a complete road renovation leading to the main gate, improving public safety, traffic management and physical security. Town of Groton leaders voted to give this new road the honorary name "Submarine Capital Avenue" as the gateway to the Submarine Base and Submarine Force Library and Museum.

In 2015, the State Bond Commission authorized OMA to provide funding to the Navy for early planning of a microgrid to be developed on the base. This microgrid provides resilient infrastructure and energy security for base operations and potentially reduce the operating cost of the base by incorporating clean cogeneration capacity and highly efficient power controls and distribution systems. In response to the state's proposal, the Secretary of the Navy agreed to provide staff authority and expertise. The Secretary sent delegations to meet with state and local officials to advance the microgrid project.

Fuel cell construction is complete. The microgrid, with a high-tech integrated distribution and monitoring system, became fully operational in 2024. The project was initiated with funding from OMA. The total value of this project is projected to be close to \$125M over the life of several agreements, including an Enhanced Use Lease (EUL), Energy Savings Performance Contracts (ESPC), Long-term Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) and other Public-Private Partnership (PPP) agreements. This project reflects an impressive collection of innovative financing tools and creative partnering between public and private sector organizations, all dedicated to creating affordable, resilient energy security for the SUBASE.

The State Bond Commission also authorized OMA to fund the removal of a derelict floating dock on the Town of Waterford's shore of the Thames River. This abandoned structure was removed to create additional maneuvering room and a larger turning basin for the much longer Block 5 Virginia class submarines to be homeported at the SUBASE.

Two new projects have been initiated by OMA in 2024. State funding will be used to replace smaller piers at the base to improve port operations and enhance safety for base personnel. The boat launch will also be reconstructed to improve base operations.

Collectively, these projects represent a wholly unique partnership with the Navy in diverse and creative areas of base improvements.

As important as these ongoing state-funded investments are, they represent only a small fraction of the military construction projects underway on the base. Since 2005, there has been hundreds of millions of dollars worth of planning, demolition, and construction projects at the SUBASE and approximately \$1B in DOD military construction funding is anticipated over the next few years to make major capital improvements to base infrastructure and waterfront piers. About \$23M in project funding was provided by the state. So, the state is an important but modest partner in a much larger ongoing effort to modernize the base and enhance its *military value*.

In 2022, Governor Ned Lamont joined Navy leaders to sign three Intergovernmental Support Agreements (IGSAs) with state, regional and local governments. These agreements use shared services and economy of scale in purchasing goods and services to reduce costs for the Navy and enhance base operations. The Navy has already saved millions of dollars by streamlining contracting for goods and services made possible by IGSAs.

OMA will continue to work closely with our congressional delegation, state and local officials, regional stakeholders, and Navy leadership to identify future projects and missions as part of our ongoing strategy to enhance the *base's military value* and protect it from closure in a future BRAC round.

Connecticut's Submarine Industrial Base

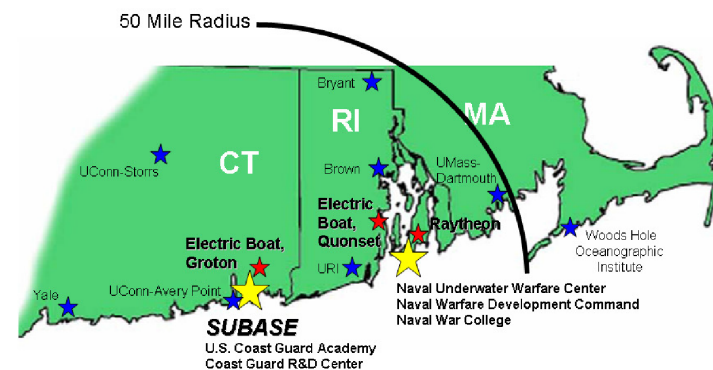
Central to the argument *Team Connecticut* advanced in the 2005 BRAC was that the SUBASE was not given adequate credit for the *unparalleled synergy* created in the close proximity and interactions among so many public and private submarine-related defense industry and military organizations.

In recent years new organizations have emerged to collaborate and leverage the region's undersea expertise. The National Institute for Undersea Vehicle Technology (NIUVT) is a university-industry partnership that collaborates with the Navy to advance workforce, research, and technology innovations. The Naval and Maritime Consortium (NMC) is a network of companies that collectively address challenges, share solutions, and collaborate on opportunities in growing national undersea, maritime, and offshore wind supply chains. The OMA Executive Director serves on the advisory boards of both organizations.

Submarines are designed and built at EB in Groton. All submarine personnel receive basic and advanced training at the Naval Submarine School on SUBASE. The Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) in nearby Newport, RI, conducts research and development activities in Rhode Island and on the SUBASE. The Naval Undersea Medical Research Labs are located on the base. And the base is home to the Naval Submarine Force Library and Museum and the Historic Ship Nautilus. This is the Submarine Capital of the World, where the nation's submarine force history and heritage are archived and commemorated. These organizations, and many others, coalesce to create a Submarine Force Center of Excellence – the center of gravity for the nation's military undersea profession.

One of the greatest affirmations of this synergy is demonstrated in the Navy's decision to establish the Naval Undersea Warfighting Development Center headquarters at Submarine Base New London. This global command impacts fleet operations and organizations worldwide from its headquarters in southeastern Connecticut.

The Nation's Center of Undersea Warfare Excellence



Understanding this synergy's value led the state to enter into assistance agreements with EB as the nation's premier manufacturer of undersea platforms and technologies. In 2007, the state helped EB refurbish dry docks in its Groton shipyard. The state's \$9.9M investment helped EB complete a \$65M renovation project that helped keep submarines in Connecticut and brought other business to the region. Since 2008, EB has generated billions in sales and hundreds of millions in wages related to submarine work performed in these dry docks. That work includes overhaul, repair, maintenance, modernization, and post-shakedown availability. These depot-level facilities, in such close proximity to the SUBASE, are also a positive consideration that a future BRAC commission will take into account when assessing the total *military value* of the SUBASE.

Subsequently, the state granted EB \$15M to help purchase the former Pfizer headquarters buildings and campus in New London. This major expansion has given EB the space needed for its work in designing the new *Columbia-class* replacement for the aging *Ohio-class* strategic ballistic missile submarines. Since 2011, EB has hired thousands of engineers and designers. The building also accommodates a workforce to produce ongoing technology upgrades for the *Virginia-class* submarines. This facility has already reached its capacity as new employees are being added to the industrial base in New London.

In 2014, the state announced an agreement with EB to help finance the company's expansion in Groton. Under the terms of this agreement, the Department of Economic and Community Development provided a \$10 million grant to EB in support of this \$31.5M capital expansion project to purchase and renovate a building in Groton. This new space was needed to accommodate 200 new purchasing and supply chain management jobs.

In 2019, as previously described, EB held a groundbreaking ceremony for a massive \$852M shipyard expansion project to prepare for the construction of *Columbia-class* nuclear-powered submarines to replace the decommissioning *Ohio-class*. All the new *Columbia-class* submarines will be assembled in the Groton shipyard.

In 2025, EB announced its purchase of the Crystal Mall in Waterford, CT. The mall will be remodeled and repurposed to support EB's growing workforce in the next several decades. The vision is to create a compatible use enterprise that supports defense industry, local businesses and host communities.

While investments in our submarine industrial base are concentrated in southeastern Connecticut, the impacts are state-wide. For example, in the *Virginia-class* program, hundreds of suppliers are dispersed throughout the state. Altogether, they supply over \$1B worth of goods and services over five years. As we

seek to secure production of *Virginia-class* submarines at two or more per year, the positive impacts on our state economy will be pervasive. And the new *Columbia-class* submarines is further enhancing this economic impact and creating thousands of high-end jobs. The direct and indirect employment related to submarine construction and repair is forecast to last for decades.



Groton, CT. (August 28, 2025) Governor Ned Lamont and Capt. Ken Curtin, Commanding Officer of Submarine Base New London, commemorate \$7.761M State of Connecticut funding for improvements at the base. (photo by Ken Curtin)

V. The National Coast Guard Museum

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) is the only Armed Service that does not have a national museum. On Apr. 5, 2013, after a decade of false starts and failed attempts, the Commandant of the Coast Guard announced the decision to build a National Coast Guard Museum (NCGM) in downtown New London. The National Coast Guard Museum Association (NCGMA), a non-profit organization chartered to build the museum, proposed a state-of-the-art building at the head of the New London City Pier. It will be adjacent to Union Station, the Greyhound bus station, and Cross Sound and Fisher's Island Ferry landings. The State Bond Commission authorized up to \$20M in state funding to build a pedestrian bridge to connect the museum with all elements of New London's multi-modal transportation hub.



*National Coast Guard Museum planned for downtown New London waterfront.
Photo courtesy of National Coast Guard Museum Association*

The Governor directed all state agencies to collaborate in this undertaking and to help the USCG and the City of New London advance the project. He also directed the OMA to coordinate the efforts of state agencies on his behalf.

The State Bond Commission approved \$500,000 for advanced engineering and design of the pedestrian bridge and authorized the DECD to enter into an assistance agreement with the NCGMA. The State of Connecticut, the City of New London, USCG and NCGMA negotiated a Memorandum of Agreement to clearly define roles and responsibilities in this partnership to build the museum.

State agencies worked closely with project stakeholders to complete the Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE) as required by the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act. The EIE authorized detailed engineering and design to proceed on the pedestrian bridge portion of the project.

Much of the financing for the \$150M museum is being raised in a national fundraising campaign coordinated by the NCGMA. On Aug. 19, 2022, a ceremonial Keel Laying event was held in New London to mark the beginning of a bulkhead and fill project to improve public access and create space needed for the museum. The event included an announcement of \$50 million in federal funding to support the project. Today, the steel framing is in place and construction is proceeding toward completion in 2027.

In March 2023 the OMA facilitated the transfer of \$1M to the USCG Academy (USCGA) to address an issue of great concern in historic preservation. The USCGA Library has a special collection area to hold historic documents, including documents signed by Alexander Hamilton, regarded as the founder of the USCG. The collections area does not have an appropriate climate-controlled environment to preserve historic artifacts and documents. The purpose of this funding is to protect and preserve priceless historic documents of irreplaceable value to the Coast Guard, State of Connecticut, and the United States of America. The State recognized that the

histories of the Coast Guard and the State of Connecticut are so entwined they cannot be separated, and it is therefore in the state's interest to preserve this history at the USCGA. The design and construction of a new special collection facility is now in progress.

Related to the National Coast Guard Museum project is the Thames River Heritage Park (TRHP) designation for the New London Harbor. Centuries of American maritime history at sites along the shores of the Thames River is connected by a water taxi service. The TRHP Foundation obtained three surplus 40-foot USN utility boats to provide this service and become part of the maritime heritage exhibit. The OMA Executive Director serves on the TRHP Foundation Board of Directors and worked with local officials to obtain the authentic Navy boats which provide waterborne access to Thames River historic sites, to eventually include the Submarine Force Museum and future National Coast Guard Museum.

The Connecticut Port Authority granted the Town of Groton a \$750,000 grant through the Small Harbor Improvement Project Program (SHIPPP) to construct a floating pier at the Submarine Force Library & Museum to receive TRHP boats. This new pier is operational and was celebrated by state and local leaders in a ribbon-cutting ceremony in May 2025. In the years ahead these Coast Guard and Navy museums, connected by the Thames River, will become the TRHP major anchor sites and are expected to draw tens of thousands of people to southeastern Connecticut.

VI. Quality of Life and Military Service in Connecticut

Advocating for service members and their families has become one of the most important roles of OMA. Military families stationed in Connecticut for duty assignments and training enjoy supportive local communities, excellent public schools, and the unique experience of living in New England. Families in transition

occasionally need reasonable accommodations, and OMA actively engages state agencies and local organizations on their behalf.

OMA worked with regional leaders at LEARN (a regional educational service center) and the Military Superintendent's Liaison Committee to make charter and magnet schools more available to military families. The DOD tends to transfer families in the summer months to avoid moves during the school year. However, the unintended consequence of this policy is that newly arriving military families often can't establish residency in time to compete in the drawing/lottery for seats in charter and magnet schools. Area superintendents implemented a program to hold back a number of seats to be made available to highly mobile families when they arrive later in the summer months. This benefits military families, giving them a level playing field to compete for seats in these unique educational programs.

The State of Connecticut is an active member of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. This national organization recognizes the unique challenges military children face as members of families in transition. Making reasonable accommodations for these children in matters such as immunizations, physicals, and administrative and academic documentation reduces the stress and challenges associated with the many relocations imposed on military families.

The OMA Executive Director served on the outreach steering committee for the Military Child Education Coalition in Connecticut. This organization facilitates training and awareness of teachers, healthcare providers and other community leaders to the unique challenges children in military families face. Deployments, relocations, separations, and service-related disabilities all take a toll on children and through awareness and training we enable communities to better recognize and respond to these issues.

In Aug. 2021, Governor Lamont visited the SUBASE to meet with military leaders, military spouses, and community leaders to sign

into law an Act that expanded economic opportunities for licensed professionals in Connecticut. The new law directs licensing agencies to grant licenses to professionals moving into Connecticut and explicitly identifies military spouses arriving with professional licenses in good standing from other states. The law also directs commissioners to investigate existing interstate compacts to determine if membership in such compacts can further expedite employment for military spouses.

OMA contributed significant time and resources to help the Town of East Lyme and the Connecticut National Guard complete a DOD-funded Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) to identify compatibility issues that arise from training operations in proximity to current and future municipal development. This study guides the Town planners in preventing encroachment and protecting the shared benefits of having two major military installations in their municipality.

A similar DOD-funded JLUS was completed with the municipalities surrounding the SUBASE in Groton. A JLUS Implementation Committee was formed to take the actions recommended in this study. The OMA Executive Director serves as chairman of the Implementation Committee. A subsequent project related to the JLUS was a follow-on study investigating impacts expected in the regional housing market related to significant growth at EB as civilian and military families are added to the workforce in southeastern Connecticut. And a new project is underway to create a Compatible Use Plan (CUP) examining parking and transportation challenges and opportunities created by the expansion of facilities and workforce at EB.

The Southeastern Council of Governments was awarded a Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) grant of \$5.7M to upgrade community utility infrastructure providing services to the base. And another grant was extended to the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development to enhance

engagement and support between EB and host communities in Southeastern Connecticut.

Working with the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, annual military appreciation events have been established in southeastern Connecticut to honor service members from all military branches. These venues offer excellent opportunities to showcase the supportive relationships and professional partnerships established between the state and our military communities. OMA has been closely involved with these initiatives.

In partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, the Navy, the Coast Guard, and the National Guard, OMA orchestrated an annual Military Orientation Day to expose future community leaders to all the military branches in eastern Connecticut. The day includes an orientation at the SUBASE, a tour of a nuclear-powered submarine, a tour of the USCG Academy or USCG Station New London, and visits to several National Guard facilities throughout southeastern Connecticut. Weather permitting, air transportation is provided by National Guard Black Hawk helicopters, ground transportation is donated by a local livery service, and waterborne transportation by the USCG. This program is designed to educate future community leaders on Connecticut-based military missions, ongoing operations, economic impacts, and civic contributions to the region. These future leaders can, in turn, inform other people within their spheres of influence.

The OMA Executive Director was a founding board member of the Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition and now serves on its Advisory Council. This non-profit organization advocates for the region's arts, entertainment, history, heritage and cultural sectors. Military art, history and performance units have played an instrumental role in the region, and having the military represented in the organization's leadership reflects an appreciation of how the military is so deeply ingrained in the social, civic, and economic landscape of Connecticut.

VII. Conclusion

Connecticut's Office of Military Affairs demonstrates an efficient model for achieving tangible strategic outcomes. Since it was established, the office produced a partnership with the Navy that was unprecedented in the United States. The SUBASE is now in a much better position to withstand another round of BRAC. The Connecticut National Guard and U.S. Coast Guard are realizing and planning for expansions with new facilities to support their missions. The state and City of New London are looking forward to being the home of the National Coast Guard Museum. OMA has helped coordinate consistent and sustained support for increases in defense and military spending, and positive economic impacts within the state. Most importantly, OMA has advanced the *quality of life* and *quality of service* for service members and their families stationed here and deploying to destinations around the world.

The state's diversified defense industries continue to thrive. Connecticut's defense industrial base is thriving due to the high quality and strategic relevance of the products designed and manufactured throughout the state. Our defense industries enjoy superb reputations for their highly skilled workforces, outstanding management, and efficient business practices.

Residents should be proud of Connecticut's long history as the *Provisions State*. It is a foundational part of our character, embedded in the economic fabric of our state and a legacy that should be carefully protected. The Office of Military Affairs will continue to seek opportunities to enhance the military and defense industry presence in Connecticut and advocate for the many organizations and people in our state - particularly military members and their families - who serve and support our nation's defense.



Robert T. Ross

Executive Director

Questions or comments concerning this report should be directed to the OMA Executive Director, at (860) 500-2374 or bob.ross@ct.gov.



Appendix A: Biography of OMA Executive Director



ROBERT T. ROSS

Bob Ross serves as an advisor to the Governor and legislature on defense industry issues and is the primary liaison to the Connecticut congressional delegation on military and defense matters. He is responsible for coordinating state-wide efforts to protect and promote Connecticut military bases and defense industries. He also represents the state in efforts to enhance the quality of life for service members and military families residing in or deploying from Connecticut.

He is a retired naval officer who piloted aircraft carriers and guided missile cruisers before directing public affairs for the United States Sixth Fleet, encompassing naval operations ashore and at sea in the Mediterranean, European and North African areas of responsibility. He also served as a spokesman at the Pentagon and was director of community and media relations for the United States Atlantic Fleet, coordinating public affairs for over 250 ships homeported at 13 major naval bases.

He holds an M.A. in National Security and Strategy from the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, RI. and an M.A. in Public Policy and Administration from the University of Connecticut. As a former City Administrator for the City of Cripple Creek, Colorado, and former First Selectman (Mayor) of the Town of Salem, Connecticut, he has decades of experience in federal, state and municipal government. He is a Trustee of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, former Commissioner on the Connecticut Maritime Commission, and former President of the national Association of Defense Communities. He is a former Adjunct Professor of Public Policy in the UCONN Graduate School and recipient of the UCONN Distinguished Alumni award for continued commitment and excellence in public administration.

Appendix B: Statutory Authority of the Connecticut Office of Military Affairs

Enacted June 19, 2015

Sec. 32-58b. Office of Military Affairs established. Duties of executive director. (a) There is established an Office of Military Affairs within the Department of Economic and Community Development for administrative purposes only. The Office of Military Affairs shall promote and coordinate state-wide activities that enhance the quality of life of all branches of military personnel and their families and to expand the military and homeland security presence in this state.

(b) The Governor, in consultation with the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, shall appoint an executive director to manage the daily activities and duties of the Office of Military Affairs. The executive director shall have the necessary qualifications to perform the duties of said office, including, but not limited to, having prior military experience, and having attained the rank of a field grade or senior officer within a branch of the armed forces. The Governor shall give preference to any person with the necessary training and experience who has served in the Navy or who has knowledge or prior experience with the federal Base Realignment and Closure or "BRAC" process. Within available appropriations, the executive director shall: (1) Appoint, employ and remove such assistants, employees and personnel as deemed necessary for the efficient and effective administration of the activities of the office; (2) coordinate state and local efforts to prevent the closure or downsizing of Connecticut military facilities, particularly United States Naval Submarine Base-New London, located in Groton; (3) maximize the state's input into the federal Base Realignment and Closure or "BRAC" process, including, but not limited to, (A) acting as liaison to the state's congressional delegation on defense, military and BRAC issues, and (B) coordinating the activities of consultants hired by the state to assist in monitoring activities related to BRAC; (4) encourage the relocation of military missions to the state; (5) coordinate state and local efforts to enhance the quality of life of all branches of military personnel stationed in or deploying from Connecticut and their families living or working in Connecticut; (6) review and make recommendations for state policies that affect Connecticut's military facilities and defense and homeland security industries; (7) coordinate state, regional and local efforts to encourage the growth of Connecticut's defense and homeland security industry; (8) serve as an advocate for service members and their families to other state agencies; (9) initiate and sustain collaborative partnerships with local military commanders; (10) consult with the Department of Economic and Community Development on proposed financial assistance agreements with defense and homeland security firms; and (11) prepare and submit a report of activities, findings and recommendations annually to the Governor and the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to commerce and public safety, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a.