



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Army Alliance Hosts Crowd of 250 at Information Session on Proposed Job Losses at Aberdeen Proving Ground**

**(Aberdeen, MD)**—The Army Alliance, in partnership with the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor (CSSC), hosted an information session and public forum on possible job losses at Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG), MD on Monday evening. A crowd of 250 attended the “Community Call to Action” at Aberdeen High School after learning over 4,300 military and civilian jobs could potentially be cut.

Harford County Executive David Craig and City of Aberdeen Mayor Michael Bennett welcomed citizens to the forum. “This is not just a big Proving Ground,” said County Executive Craig. “It’s a research and development center with the training and technology to equip our soldiers, sailors, and airmen in support of their mission while allowing us to enjoy the freedoms we have.”

Mayor Bennett also noted the strategic value and critical role APG brings to our nation’s defense. “We are fully committed to maintaining our partnership and continuing to keep APG strong and support its mission and its workforce,” said Bennett.

A panel of state and local leaders provided detailed information regarding the findings of the Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment (SPEA) report that was released in late June, and discussed the possible impacts to the Greater APG community throughout the region.

Jim Richardson, Economic Development Director for Harford County and moderator for the evening’s panel stated, “This process is a marathon, not a sprint. We need your participation to tell APG’s story in response to this SPEA.” He also clarified by prefacing the context of these actions. “This is not a BRAC activity, but part of a formal process for troop reduction. Tonight is the beginning on an ongoing dialogue with the community.”



This event served as a “Community Call to Action” with business and political leaders along with concerned citizens attending to learn more about the potential impacts and to sign a “Declaration of Support” that is part of the formal response to the U.S. Army Environmental Command.

Jill McClune, Army Alliance President and panel member, reviewed the Department of the Army’s Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Army 2020 force structure realignment process, and the requirements the Army has at hand to make a significant reduction in troop numbers. The Supplemental (SPEA) has compounded the potential job loss by recommending additional cuts that could force impacts on the civilian workforce as well.

“Our military at APG has a very unique set of skills,” said Jill referring to the 20<sup>th</sup> CBRNE team, who is deployable to address chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive offenses. “We recognize that there will be cuts,” commented Army Alliance President Jill McClune. “APG has unique capabilities in research and development and the SPEA report doesn’t recognize that the typical military-civilian ratio is strongly reversed at APG. Thus the “cookie cutter” approach to proposed cuts could have an unintended adverse impact on developing the technology needs to keep the troops fighting effectively,” McClune said.

APG is one of nine Army installations selected for potential troop and personnel reductions in this supplemental round, joining a total of 30 identified installations. The potential cuts at APG represent nearly a third of existing staff levels.

Although the assessment focuses on environmental elements, socio-economic is one of the factors. “A significant socio-economic impact will result from this SPEA action,” said Eric McLaughlin, panel member and Chair of Harford County’s Economic Development Advisory Board. “Growth in our region didn’t happen by accident but rather by an organized, measured approach to expansion at APG. This regional economic momentum has resulted in economic prosperity during difficult times,” stated McLaughlin, who noted the influx of more than 110 defense contractors, a median household income more than twice the national average, income tax revenue that has grown by more than \$38 million annually, and that APG is Maryland’s third largest workforce center by population. “A 4,000 position cut would reduce our progress by half,” he added.



Final decisions have not yet been made as to which installations will be selected for reductions in soldiers and Army civilians. This is a result of the current federal budget constraints and the resulting reduction of the Army's active duty from 513,000 to 450,000 troop numbers. Sequestration could further reduce the number to 420,000. Fort Meade is the only other Maryland installation impacted by the current SPEA. They are the only two installations impacted on the East Coast.

"Maryland is blessed with a congressional delegation that is in tune with the SPEA process and works diligently to protect Maryland and its workforce," said BGen Mike Hayes, Managing Director of the State's Office of Military Affairs and a forum panel member. "Aberdeen Proving Ground is well represented within the Maryland Military Installation Council (MMIC) giving the region a voice in support of local defense efforts," he added. He acknowledged the opportunity to take a look at the superb capabilities in the Edgewood chem-bio community and augment these aspects that could bring more to Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Brian Simmons, Army Alliance Board Member and panel member stated, "This partial reduction at APG is incredibly difficult to quantify. It's a given that the socioeconomic impact is significant, so our focus needs to be centered on helping the Army. What our community says does matter."

"The Army has to go through this process and we want to help them with the facts about our defense community," said Jill McClune in closing. "APG is the answer to a smaller Army when you consider the research, development, testing and evaluation (RDT&E) capacity and capabilities our installation has to offer."

A Declaration Statement of Support for Aberdeen Proving Ground was signed by attendees as they left the public forum; a unified response will be drafted by the Army Alliance.

The SPEA public comment period will conclude on August 25, 2014. Declaration signing will continue through August 20<sup>th</sup> at four locations between 8AM-5PM: CSSC Office at 2021-E Pulaski Highway in Havre de Grace, Harford Business Innovation Center (HBIC) at 1362 Brass Mill Road in Belcamp; Harford County Economic Development Office at 220 S. Main St in Bel Air, and Cecil County Economic Development at the Cecil County Administrative Offices, 200 Chesapeake Blvd, Suite 2700 in Elkton.

Copies of the presentation materials are available at [www.apg-cssc.com](http://www.apg-cssc.com), under "spotlight."

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