

Lt. Col. Jonathan Shiroma, chief of media relations of the California National Guard, responds to some questions from Marijuana Business Daily regarding Gov. Gavin Newsom's announcement that 150 National Guard troops will deploy to Northern California to "go after illegal cannabis farms":

Will you share any details about the National Guard Counterdrug Task Force?

Personnel levels: Our current strength is 200-plus California National Guard soldiers and airmen.

Annual funding: The CDTF's funding equates to a median of \$25 million per year over the last three years. For every dollar in funding CDTF received in the 2018 fiscal year, \$83 was returned in seizures from illegal drug operations.

Specific mission parameters: Counterdrug Task Force (CDTF) is committed to supporting federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies that have a counterdrug nexus as their primary purpose.

The law enforcement agencies (LEAs) we support often do not have funding for the manpower, man hours and/or equipment required to run long-term operations.

CDTF provides personnel and equipment to close that resource gap, and our full-spectrum capabilities support each phase of the operation. Our support is consistent with the Office of the National Drug Control Policy, the Department of Defense Guidance, and the Governor's State plans under guidance from the National Guard Bureau, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics and Global Threats Policy (DASD CN>) and the California State Military Adjutant General.

Does the Counterdrug Task Force focus on narcotics crimes involving cannabis on both public lands and private lands? Or only public lands?

This part of the mission is still being sorted out, whether the new deployment will be focused on eradicating "trespass grows" on public lands or if it will also possibly be raiding unlicensed grows on private lands.

The CDTF is invested in countering illicit drug operations that pose serious safety threats to our communities, threaten endangered wildlife and destroy our lands.

Marijuana remains a federally illegal Schedule 1 narcotic, and CDTF will continue to support law enforcement efforts to disrupt and deter the production, transportation and/or sale of illegal drugs, whether on public or private lands. CDTF receives requests from LEAs and support missions that fall within our policy guidance and mission sets.

In the 2018 fiscal year, CDTF's support to 176 LEAs during more than 500 missions denied drug-trafficking organizations the ability to conduct illegal drug operations within our state. In all, CDTF supported \$2.2 billion in seizures of illegal drugs, weapons, property and currency. In

regards to illegal marijuana, 108,630 pounds of processed and 1.1 million plants were seized last year with a street value of \$1.7 billion.

Will you share any details about the California National Guard's involvement in the CAMP Program? The National Guard is involved, according to a [news release](#), and the Humboldt County sheriff called the governor's move a "carryover of the CAMP Program." What has been the National Guard's involvement in that program to date, and how much would a 150-personnel boost change that?

During the Campaign Against Marijuana Planting (CAMP) in 2017, CDTF supported 37 agencies and operated in 34 of the 58 counties in California.

CAMP accounted for 82% of the total marijuana CDTF eradicated that year at 1,264,715 illicit marijuana plants. In addition, 8,696 pounds of illegal processed marijuana was seized during CAMP in 2017.

CDTF's marijuana-eradication efforts are a separate mission from any directed by the governor's recent order for the border, therefore a 150-personnel boost specific to that order would not change the current marijuana-targeted mission set.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

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