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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

STATEMENT OF  
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PERFORMING THE DUTIES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
(ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT)

BEFORE THE  
  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

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## **Introduction**

Chairman Bergman, Ranking Member Garamendi, and distinguished members of the Readiness Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Department of the Navy's (DON) Energy, Installations and Environment portfolio. We continue to invest in critical readiness enablers, which is foundational to making sure that the DON remains the most formidable maritime force the world has ever known - for the next 250 years and beyond.

## **Department of Defense Priorities**

Secretary Hegseth has set forth a clear mission: to protect the United States, safeguard our allies and ensure "Peace through Strength." The Department of the Navy's number one priority is warfighting readiness. In order to ensure the Department of the Navy remains at peak readiness, we will focus on strengthening shipbuilding and the maritime industrial base, fostering an adaptive, accountable and warfighting culture, and ensuring the health, welfare and training of our people. In my capacity in Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment, I fully support both the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Navy's guidance by delivering critical readiness enablers by, with and through our 95 Navy and Marine Corps installations, our power projection platforms on the shore.

## **Critical Infrastructure**

Navy and Marine Corps installations are power projection platforms from which naval forces train, deploy, and maintain forward presence to enable geographic Combatant Commanders to meet operational requirements. The DON is reviewing our critical infrastructure to fully address the gaps in modernization and recapitalization. Through the DON's Critical

Infrastructure Synchronization Forum, we continue to work through the challenges of infrastructure resilience, and to address the threats to infrastructure in support of critical missions.

Recapitalization of our infrastructure and demolition of excess, failing infrastructure will ensure that our forces, systems, and facilities can continue to operate in the future fight. The DON will continue to address vulnerabilities, but also to restore and sustain core utility infrastructure including water and electricity grid protection from cyber threats.

### *Military Construction*

The Secretary of Defense has issued a clear directive to focus on eliminating waste and duplication to ensure the Department can focus on its core mission of defending the Nation. To improve the readiness and lethality of our Warfighters, the DON is in full support of a Deputy Secretary of Defense directed effort to conduct a 60-day review of the Department's Military Construction and Facility, Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization programs.

We will continue to invest in new platforms, technologies, and infrastructure that will add capability for our submarine force and address maintenance requirements in order to increase surge capacity from Fleet concentration areas. In addition, the program continues to recapitalize our four public shipyards through the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program. Examples of military construction projects that are building a more lethal force include:

- Weapons Magazines at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown
- Aircraft Development and Maintenance Facilities at Naval Air Station Patuxent River
- Maintenance Facility and Marine Air Group Headquarters at Cherry Point
- Aircraft Maintenance Hangar at Cherry Point

- Communications Towers at Twenty-Nine Palms

We recognize that infrastructure in support of critical missions at installations goes beyond piers, hangars, runways, training and support facilities where our teammates work, train and live. It is also the energy, water, and utility systems that serve as the backbone of our operations. We continue to invest in new electrical infrastructure at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Norfolk Naval Shipyard. The MILCON program also includes overseas projects that enable forward-deployed naval forces. One example in Guam is the repair of the ocean facing Glass Breakwater. This repair project has begun, providing protection for the base piers, anchorages and the main commercial supply port for this strategic location in the Indo-Pacific region.

The Marine Corps continues to implement the Commandant's *Force Design 2030* strategy and the Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI) in the Pacific. The procurement of additional land to support the Fallon Range Training Complex Modernization in Nevada remains a Department priority and we have acquired five parcels to date. We will continue to enhance the resilience of our installations by replacing and updating inventory, utilities and facilities using every program and tool available, but we will focus on actions that enhance lethality and operational resilience of our Marines and Sailors.

#### *Importance of Multi-Year Restoration and Modernization*

Navy shore infrastructure is a critical enabler for fleet operations in support of national security. The DON will work with the Office of the Secretary of Defense on a proposed pilot for multi-year facilities recapitalization projects at our installations. This pilot program would follow a similarly suited funding construct that has been implemented for ship maintenance. The enhanced funding profile of multi-year appropriation aligns with project execution and

will create greater opportunities for performance delivery and increased readiness of our shore infrastructure.

The Navy's key shore capability areas include utility systems, Unaccompanied Housing, airfield operations, waterfront operations, depot maintenance and ordnance facilities. The projected budget request will continue sustainment funding on the highest priority Nuclear Deterrence Facilities, infrastructure in support of Navy C5ISR missions related to Naval Operational Architecture, Unaccompanied Housing, and fitness centers. The Marine Corps portfolio continues efforts to eliminate poor and failing facilities and improve Quality of Life through *Barracks 2030* initiatives.

#### *Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program*

To keep our Nuclear Fleet ready, we continue to modernize our four public shipyards through the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP). As we continue to acquire the nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers we need today and invest in the development of the next generation of platforms and capabilities for the future fight, we will require consistent investments in the infrastructure that enables these platforms, and we are grateful for Congress' shared focus on this national security priority.

As the Navy executes its largest-ever facility projects through SIOP, we continue to build collaborative relationships, set more realistic schedules, develop better forecasting tools and ensure that resources are allocated efficiently. With a concerted team effort between the DON and industry, we will streamline construction timelines, improve workforce readiness and maintain the operational superiority of our fleet.

### *Authorities and Acquisition*

Across the DON team, we continue to prioritize increased use of our Title 10 authorities in real estate, energy, Intergovernmental Support Agreements (IGSA), and Other Transaction Authorities to solve installation infrastructure challenges outside traditional MILCON and FSRM funding. In the real estate portfolio, we continue to examine 10 U.S.C. §2809 (Long-term Facilities Contracts for Certain Activities and Services) and §2812 (Lease-Purchase of Facilities), to identify opportunities to improve our facilities. We are working with OSD to examine scoring requirements so that we can find projects that align to the maximal solution needed to exercise these authorities. One initiative currently underway combines multiple authorities for a new 75-acre aviation maintenance complex between Fleet Readiness Center East and North Carolina Global TransPark. The initiative, an innovative partnership, is the first of its kind within the Department of Defense. Leaders anticipate it will offer economic growth opportunities in the Eastern North Carolina area and save millions of taxpayer dollars that fund military aircraft maintenance.

### *Good Defense Community Partners*

The DON serves in defense communities in 95 locations around the globe. We recognize the need to be good community partners, working with both our civic and business leaders to improve the resilience of our military installations inside and outside the fence line. These partnerships promote the value of military installations and strengthen communities through collaborative planning and implementation in support of America's military. Our Marines and Sailors are better warfighters when they know that their families are living in safe, resilient communities.

Our strong Environment & Mission Readiness program supports operational requirements and mission schedules in areas such as critical infrastructure recapitalization, force laydown, platform home-basing, range modernization, warfare training, and weapons system testing. The program will also continue environmental restoration on installations, most notably the ongoing response following fuel releases at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility in Hawaii. On Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) response, as part of comprehensive Department of Defense-wide efforts, the DON response to address our historical releases of PFAS to the environment protects the health and welfare of our Service members and civilians, their families, and the surrounding defense communities.

### *Indo-Pacific Region*

We remain steadfast in our commitment to the government and citizens of the territory of Guam. We face an unprecedented pace of our mission growth on Guam. Infrastructure and facilities are required to support the expansion of our on-island infrastructure footprint. We greatly appreciate Congress' approval of an extension of the H2B visa program through 2029.. Extension of the H2B visa authority ensures cost stability in construction contract bids for critical infrastructure projects on Guam. Ensuring new infrastructure is delivered on time and within costs will be a critical enabler to reestablishing deterrence in the Indo-Pacific.

We remain committed to working with our government partners and stakeholders in Guam. We appreciate this committee's support as we carry out this process in a manner that will enhance the readiness of our forces throughout the region.

The relationship between the DON and Hawai'i has been a critical piece of U.S. military and diplomatic strategy for over 125 years. Hawai'i's strategic location in the Pacific, unique training and port areas, and support for critical defense missions make it a cornerstone of the

DON's posture in the Indo-Pacific region. In support of this indispensable defense mission, the DON leases land, primarily adjacent to U.S.-owned installations, that provides ideal locations for specialized defense capabilities, multi-domain operating areas to generate future force readiness, and training ranges that our Joint Force leverages with allies and partners. Mission ready and modernized ranges are essential to the Department's mission to organize, train, and equip combat ready naval forces to deter and win wars.

The DON will continue to demonstrate our unwavering commitment to collaboration and transparency with our partners in Hawai'i. Last year, the Department of Defense established the Hawai'i Coordination Cell (HCC) for Energy, Installations and Environment, to enhance our collaboration with the people of Hawai'i to protect and preserve the Hawaiian lands on which we operate.

#### *Housing for our Sailors, Marines and Families*

The DON remains committed to the health and safety of our Sailors, Marines and their families, as taking care of our Sailors and Marines is warfighter readiness. We are focused on the early identification and resolution of family housing issues, as well as improving processes and oversight of our resident's experiences. For Unaccompanied Housing (UH), our focus remains on facilities improvement, professional management and resident satisfaction.

To address the UH conditions and shortages, the DON is reviewing our inventory to inform how we optimize MILCON projects and privatization initiatives. Both the Navy and Marine Corps utilize models to make data informed decisions on facility investments. The Marine Corps continues to use the Capital Planning Tool (formerly the Readiness Maximization Tool) to leverage a tiered and targeted approach to facility lifecycle management. This tool



enabled the reduction of footprint while prioritizing investments where they will have the most impact on the portfolio.

We continue to work with sister services and OSD on implementation of the NDAA and recent GAO recommendations. The Navy continues to implement the *Forging Communities of Excellence* initiative which includes three distinct lines of effort on facilities improvement, workforce development and quality of life. In addition, the Navy now conducts monthly command inspections of the Unaccompanied Housing facilities. The Marine Corps' *Barracks 2030* initiative lays out an ambitious plan to improve the Marine Corps management of barracks, modernize the inventory and update the refresh rate of materiel. The Marine Corps completed a 100% wall-to-wall environmental, health and safety inspection of every barracks room to establish the baseline conditions of habitability. The deficiencies found were in line with the September 2023 GAO report and underscores the importance of swift resolution of maintenance actions.

#### *Military Housing Privatization Initiative Family Housing*

For the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI), we are reinforcing DON oversight and exercising active leadership to ensure that the families who live in privatized housing have the tools and support they need. Starting with the 2020 NDAA, the DON housing team implemented many oversight and QoL initiatives including full implementation of the Tenant Bill of Rights, universal lease, completion of the third-party inspection of homes, increased resident advocates and home inspectors, and other NDAA and audit recommendations. We continue to improve on the tools to perform better analyses of our processes, policies, and

the overall program to ensure higher levels of service and satisfaction for our Sailors, Marines, and their families.

#### Government-Owned Family Housing

The DON's government controlled inventory of over 8,500 homes is primarily located in overseas locations, such as Japan, Guam and Cuba, and a few locations in the United States. The DON continues to fund the operations, oversight and sustainment, and modernization of these homes while focusing on the growing housing requirement in Guam. We have seen the efforts and self-improvement techniques, which include increased communication with the service members, their families and third-party inspections that are utilized in privatized housing, work for Government-owned housing oversight and service member engagement.

#### Unaccompanied Housing

UH supports Navy and Marine Corps Readiness by providing eligible single Sailors and Marines with housing and related services in support of the DON's mission and readiness. The DON is focusing on targeted investments and policy changes to improve the condition of inadequate UH and identification of a sustainable, optimized UH program to ensure safe and reliable housing for all Sailors and Marines. The DON's current government owned UH inventory consists of approximately 108,611 bedrooms in 1,343 UH buildings (Navy has 685; USMC has 658) throughout the DON's installations. In 2024, the Navy's Restoration and Modernization investments yielded an overall improvement of 1,011 beds, eliminating 451 inadequate beds. In 2024, the Marine Corps repaired or renovated 11 barracks that provide housing for approximately 4,200 Marines. Currently, 75% of Navy UH and 83% of Marine

Corps UH have a Building Condition Index evaluated as adequate. We have utilized all tools to improve the remainder of our inventory, to include the expansion of the QR code maintenance reporting program to expedite maintenance actions. The Navy and Marine Corps anticipate increased investment in the UH program.

The two pilot program projects to privatize UH have significantly increased Quality of Life (QoL) for our Sailors and Marines. The first pilot project in San Diego which consists of 2,398 beds, was privatized in 2006 and continues to score the highest of all privatized efforts inside the DON's privatized housing portfolio. The second privatized UH project was established in 2007 in the Hampton Roads fleet concentration area, consisting of 3,682 beds, and is also a QoL success. The GAO report on Military Unaccompanied Housing noted that service members living in privatized barracks consistently stated that they were satisfied with the condition of their housing, which led to an improvement in Quality of Life. The Navy is working on expansions for our two locations that utilized the pilot authority for additional privatized UH in San Diego and Norfolk.

To further the DON's effort to address shortages of covered military unaccompanied housing, we are actively developing a strategy to use authorities to lease, operate, maintain, or otherwise contract for real property. This strategy will provide installation leadership with options to select the appropriate approach that best meets the needs of their installation in a cost-effective and timely manner while maintaining mission readiness. The DON looks forward to working with Congress to expand the development of privatized UH at other DON installations.

### Energy Dominance

Energy dominance is vital to the security of our nation and underpins DON's ability to contribute to achieving "Peace through Strength" by ensuring naval forces have assured, continuous access to the necessary types and amounts of energy needed to maintain a global presence, deter adversaries, respond to crises, and, if necessary, fight and win our Nation's wars. From the installation to the battlefield, whether for facilities, weapons systems, or warfighting platforms, the DON Energy and Water Program supports rebuilding our military and reestablishing deterrence by driving installation and operational theater vulnerability assessments and capability advancements to enhance requirements development which overmatch evolving threats.

The DON invests in shore energy and water initiatives to ensure that our installations remain the power projection platforms from which we man, train, and equip our Sailors and Marines and that installations are resilient to a broad spectrum of threats. Using acquisition authorities like energy savings performance contracts and power purchase agreements allows the DON to achieve energy and water efficiencies and create power generation and storage. Security and resilience solutions pursued by the Navy and Marine Corps directly support the accomplishment of the President's Executive Order 14156, *Declaring a National Energy Emergency*, directive to collaborate across government and with industry to deliver and expedite the completion of critical energy infrastructure and drive improvements to the DON's aging utility systems, facilities and building control systems for improved cybersecurity, physical hardening and reduced sustainment costs. The DON collaborates with local communities, industry, and other government entities to identify and implement regional resilience and security solutions, which are tested through Black Start Exercises and joint resilience planning efforts that look inside and outside the fence line to inform what is needed to harden our critical

infrastructure. In addition, the DON has privatized water utilities at Naval Air Station Patuxent River and Naval Station Mayport, and began the process to solicit privatization of the electrical system at Norfolk Naval Shipyard. The DON recognizes and appreciates the infrastructure sustainment, supply chain, and military resilience benefits of engaging with the utility industry to ensure consistent, reliable, high-quality energy and water for warfighter requirements.

It is imperative to harden our defense of critical utilities infrastructure and to mitigate vulnerabilities in our facility related control systems to prevent the weaponization of our utilities. To this end, the DON has embarked on a Secure Power initiative to transform the way we address energy issues beyond power interruptions to all power quality issues, improving energy resilience and reliability, developing both detection and monitoring. These efforts seek to prevent and mitigate attempts by our adversaries from exploiting our utility and building systems, ensuring these systems are cybersecure and available to drive toward improved mission readiness and warfighter capability. The DON has invested in energy resilience technologies such as cyber-secure microgrids and other technologies that are already available in the U.S., such as a zinc-bromide technology battery the DON is implementing at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, thereby reducing our reliance on vulnerable or adversarial foreign supply chains.

The DON's ability to fight and win is significantly dependent upon reliable access to energy when, where, and in the quantities required. Operational energy investments expand energy generation, storage and use options to provide agility to the warfighter while operating in all domains supporting the operational requirements of Contested Logistics, Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) and Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO). More lethal weapons platforms and systems must be as efficient as possible to reduce energy demand

on the battlefield allowing the warfighter to remain on station longer and reduce requirements to logistics assets in the weapons engagement zone. To increase warfighting capability without increasing fuel availability demands, the DON is developing safe and standard advanced batteries that cut across domains and warfighting functions. Among other benefits for surface, undersea, ground, air, space, and Sailor and Marine requirements, advanced batteries will enable directed energy and long-dwell/long-duration unmanned systems, and reduce logistics demands and weapons systems' sensing signatures. These goals require that we partner with industry, our sister Services, and the Department of Energy to ensure that the U.S. has a healthy supply chain to reduce our reliance on foreign sources while ensuring that Navy and Marine Corps weapons systems and platforms are more lethal and capable.

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for your steadfast commitment to our Sailors, Marines, Civilians and their families and for your purposeful focus on our upcoming budget request. I look forward to our continued partnership as we work together to ensure the Navy and Marine Corps remain the most formidable maritime fighting force in the world.