

**Statement of the Honorable John Garamendi
Chairman, Readiness Subcommittee
“Ensuring Resiliency of Military Installations and Operations in
Response to Climate Changes”**

March 13, 2019

Is the US military ready for Climate Change? Recent events indicate considerable doubt. Just this last year Hurricanes Florence and Michael caused billions of dollars in damage to Camp Lejeune and leveled much of Tyndall Air Force Base. California wildfires led to the evacuation of family housing at Camp Pendleton, Naval Air Station Point Mugu, and the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center. In addition, our coastal installations and their surrounding communities are already experiencing significant flooding due to sea-level rise. The Army’s Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site at the Kwajalein Atoll in the South Pacific is threatened by sea level rise and may not last 20 years. The Navy’s principal Atlantic Base Norfolk/Hampton Rhodes and the Naval Academy are already experiencing flooding. Melting polar ice in Arctic regions has already opened new sea routes and competition for resources, yet it appears that DOD has not developed a systematic strategy for ensuring U.S. national interests in the Arctic.

The United States military is one of the largest employers in the world. It is also one of its largest consumers of energy. The DOD owns millions of acres of global real property, including over 550,000 facilities valued over a trillion dollars, and the Department is uniquely situated to enhance its readiness and resiliency through effective energy policy and programs. Installations are where we generate the force, train and sustain them, and in many cases house

critical operational missions. One way to enhance readiness is to consume less. In FY 2017, the DOD consumed over 85 million barrels of fuel to power ships, aircraft, combat vehicles, and contingency bases at a cost of nearly \$8.2 billion. In many cases, through contract vehicles such as energy savings performance contracts, these energy saving and resiliency enhancing improvements can be made at no up-front cost to the Department.

In contested environments, better fuel consumption rates extend range and mitigate risk related to resupply convoys. Naval vessels are vulnerable during at-sea replenishment. For austere land-based sites in remote locations supporting contingency operations, lowered fuel and water consumption rates are an essential readiness enabler, helping the facility to maintain a lower profile.

It is essential that our bases and facilities recover quickly from extreme weather events and energy disruptions that impact mission capabilities. Section 335 of the FY18 National Defense Authorization Act required the Department of Defense to report on the Effects of Climate Change on the Department and propose mitigation plans. The required report was delivered to Congress in January 2019 and indicated that two thirds of the 79 installations reviewed are vulnerable to flooding, more than half are vulnerable to drought, and about half are vulnerable to wildfires. Unfortunately, the report did not meet the congressional reporting requirement to describe future focused mitigations necessary to ensure mission resiliency.

To ensure it can perform its national defense mandate, the Department of Defense must plan for a variety of exigencies. In the 2014 Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap, the Department noted that “Rising global temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, climbing sea levels, and more extreme weather events will intensify the challenges of global instability, hunger, poverty, and conflict. They will likely lead to food and water shortages, pandemic

disease, disputes over refugees and resources, and destruction by natural disasters in regions across the globe.”¹

Not only are these climate-related events impacting installation readiness, but they are also creating more frequent requests for military support for disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. Both active duty service members and national guard personnel are increasingly responding to assist communities impacted by these events.

Climate change presents a myriad of readiness challenges both at home and abroad. It is not only a future threat but is impacting resiliency of our installations and operations today. The Department must act now to address these challenges.

From our witnesses today, we hope to learn from their perspectives on readiness impacts from changing climates and what actions the Department should be taking to address these challenges.

¹ Department of Defense 2014 Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap, forward, https://www.acq.osd.mil/eie/downloads/CCARprint_wForward_e.pdf