



Committee: Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness & Management Support
Event: [To receive an update on matters within the jurisdiction of the Assistant Secretaries for Energy, Installation, and Environment in support of the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act](#)
Date: June 25, 2025
Time: 2:30 PM
Place: SR-232A Russell Senate Office Building

Member Toplines:

*Chair Dan Sullivan (R-AK)*¹: Sullivan emphasized that deteriorating military infrastructure poses a serious threat to national security and readiness, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, where over-concentrated bases at locations like Guam leaves the U.S. vulnerable. He called for greater dispersal, resilience, and logistical capacity—especially for fuel and energy—and urged immediate action to address poor housing conditions for service members.

*Ranking Member Mazie Hirono (D-HI)*²: Hirono emphasized the need for timely, accountable military infrastructure improvements and criticized the diversion of maintenance funds to border operations. She highlighted the importance of safe, quality housing and called for transparency on Army facility spending. She underscored the value of operational energy initiatives and programs like the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration and Sentinel Landscapes, which enhance energy security, prevent encroachment, and protect ecosystems. She also urged proactive planning for climate-related risks to installation resilience.

Witness Toplines:

*Dale Marks, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Energy Installation, and Environment*³: Marks highlighted the FY26 budget's focus on strengthening military readiness through investments in infrastructure modernization, energy dominance, and installation resilience. He emphasized the role of operational energy and environmental cleanup in maintaining effective bases amid threats from aging infrastructure and extreme weather. He also underscored support for family and unaccompanied housing, and efforts to streamline environmental and military construction processes. In the Indo-Pacific, he noted the importance of coordination in Hawaii and Guam to counter China's regional influence.

*Dr. Jeff Waksman, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy, and Environment*⁴: Waksman emphasized that Army installations must be modern, resilient, and

¹ Opening statement was not available online at the time of this memo's distribution.

² Opening statement was not available online at the time of this memo's distribution.

³ Opening statement was not available online at the time of this memo's distribution.

⁴ Opening statement was not available online at the time of this memo's distribution.

integrated into mission readiness and lethality. He highlighted billions of dollars in investments for facility sustainment, new construction, and planned investments from privatized housing partners. Waksman underscored efforts to strengthen energy resilience—exploring technologies like nuclear power and conducting Black Start exercises—and noted that environmental programs help preserve training lands and ensure water safety. He also pointed to the importance of new oversight mechanisms, third-party housing inspections, and cost-saving energy performance contracts.

*Brenda Johnson-Turner, Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment*⁵: Johnson-Turner stressed the importance of resilient, modern installations to warfighting readiness and power projection for the Navy and Marine Corps. She described the need to address aging military infrastructure and highlighted the importance of ongoing investments such as the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program and the Marine Corps' Barracks 2030 initiative. She also noted the Department of the Navy's work to expand public-private housing ventures to improve quality of life, efforts to partner with communities and utilities to reduce vulnerabilities, and continued environmental cleanup work, including on emerging contaminants such as Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS).

*Michael Saunders, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Energy, Installations and Environment*⁶: Saunders emphasized that installation readiness and infrastructure modernization are foundational to sustaining warfighting lethality. He highlighted quality-of-life investments, PFAS cleanup, and the Installation & Infrastructure Action Plan as integral to aligning bases with mission needs and enabling combat power delivery at speed and scale. He also detailed military efforts to improve energy resilience through microgrids and commercial microreactors, emphasizing their role in deterrence and power projection in the face of growing threats from China.

Major Takeaways:

There was bipartisan concern about aging military infrastructure and climate-related risks to military readiness, though members differed on funding practices and regulatory priorities.

- Hirono warned that the Department of Defense (DOD) is undermining its own infrastructure goals by diverting facility funds to border operations. She framed this diversion as contributing to the growing backlog in needed repairs and called for a recommitment to long-term facility maintenance.
- Sen. **Deb Fischer** (R-NE) also pointed to aging and inadequate facilities, highlighting long delays in recovery efforts at Offutt Air Force Base after major flooding. She described the need to create a more efficient process for rebuilding and modernizing damaged infrastructure.

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Lawmakers on both sides agreed that poor housing conditions weaken military effectiveness, but Democrats emphasized greater oversight and accountability, while Republicans focused on construction progress and public-private solutions.

- Sen. **Tim Kaine** (D-VA) cited reports documenting widespread military housing deficiencies and stressed that unsafe or unhealthy living conditions continue to affect morale and retention.
- Republican members echoed concerns about housing quality, but highlighted recent steps taken by the Trump Administration to address the problem, including the Marine Corps' Barracks 2030 initiative and expanded use of public-private partnerships.
- Kaine also raised the issue of persistent drone incursions at military bases and defense contractor sites, urging stronger coordination among DOD, federal agencies, and local authorities.

Lawmakers broadly agreed on the need to strengthen U.S. posture in the Indo-Pacific and improve energy resilience, but differed in their emphasis on permitting reform, environmental safeguards, and community engagement.

- Sullivan called for dispersing U.S. forces away from concentrated hubs like Guam and toward distributed basing in Alaska and the Aleutian Islands.
- Sullivan also pressed for reforming the *National Environmental Policy Act*, arguing that its environmental provisions were causing permitting delays and hindering construction of critical infrastructure, including energy and fuel storage.
- Members on both sides acknowledged the strategic risks posed by the closure of the Red Hill fuel facility, particularly for Indo-Pacific logistics. Sullivan used this to bolster his call for investments in modular nuclear energy and the Alaska LNG project, framing them as essential for energy independence, operational continuity, and regional partnerships.
- Hirono, while supporting infrastructure resilience, emphasized the importance of environmental and cultural sensitivity—especially in Hawaii—and warned against military projects that fail to meaningfully engage with local communities or address long-term ecological impacts.