



Committee: House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness

Event: [Energy, Installations, and Environment Update](#)

Date: March 4, 2026

Executive Summary:

The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness hosted a hearing focused on the role of energy resilience, infrastructure modernization, and emerging technologies in supporting U.S. military installations. Members from both parties agreed that reliable energy and modern infrastructure are essential to military readiness, particularly as installations face growing pressures from extreme weather and aging facilities. Republicans emphasized the potential of advanced nuclear technologies to provide reliable power for bases, while expressing skepticism about the suitability of wind and solar power for mission-critical operations. Democrats highlighted the importance of an “all-of-the-above” energy strategy that is inclusive of renewables. They warned that halting previously approved offshore wind energy projects and reducing federal support for clean energy could undermine installation resilience and long-term energy security.

Member Toplines:

[Chair Jack Bergman \(R-MI-01\):](#) Bergman argued that military readiness begins on U.S. bases, emphasizing that safe housing and modern infrastructure are essential to supporting service members and maintaining mission capability. He highlighted concerns about rising military construction costs and delays in environmental remediation, stressing the need for stronger oversight and more efficient management to ensure defense resources are effectively utilized.

*Ranking Member John Garamendi (D-CA-08):*¹ Garamendi emphasized that Department of War (DoW) installations form the foundation of military readiness but have long been underfunded. He highlighted the growing role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) on military installations, cautioning that new data centers must be paired with sufficient energy capacity and resilient power systems. Garamendi also stressed the importance of energy security, including microgrids, batteries, and advanced nuclear technologies. He called for continued oversight of major infrastructure programs and defense energy siting decisions.

Witness Toplines:

[Dale Marks, Assistant Secretary of War for Energy, Installations, and Environment:](#) Marks warned that decades of deferred maintenance and underinvestment have degraded U.S. military installations and threaten operational readiness. He emphasized the need to reform the military construction process while accelerating infrastructure modernization, including investments in microgrids, redundant generation, advanced storage, and next-generation energy technologies to protect bases from grid disruptions. Marks also highlighted efforts to

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

improve service member housing and expand partnerships with the private sector to modernize installations.

*Jordan Gillis, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Energy, and Environment:*² Gillis emphasized that Army installations are central to warfighting readiness, requiring resilient energy, water, and modern infrastructure to support training, deployment, and the growing energy demands of advanced military technologies. He highlighted efforts to reduce military construction costs and expand partnerships with the private sector to invest in base infrastructure and energy resilience. Gillis also pointed to the Army's JANUS program, which aims to deploy advanced nuclear reactors on installations to provide secure, on-site power.

Brendan Rogers, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations, and Environment: Rogers explained that naval installations function as critical "weapon systems" that support combat training and operational readiness. He argued that sustained investment in infrastructure is essential to maintaining U.S. military capability. Rogers also underscored the Navy's growing energy and water demands, pointing to efforts to expand resilient power systems and invest in next-generation energy technologies, including advanced nuclear power.

Michael Borders, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Energy, Installations, and Environment: Borders described Air Force installations as essential platforms for projecting air and space power, noting that modern infrastructure and resilient energy systems are critical to maintaining readiness. He discussed efforts to align infrastructure with strategic requirements, remove outdated facilities, and use innovative construction models to accelerate project delivery and reduce costs. Borders also highlighted the development of advanced nuclear energy, including microreactors, to provide safe and reliable power for key military installations.

Major Takeaways:

Energy Resilience and Generation for Military Installations

- Rep. **Gabe Vasquez** (D-NM-02) emphasized that reliable energy supply is mission-critical for military bases and called for an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy to protect installations from extreme weather and cyberattacks.
- He noted that roughly 98% of electricity used on U.S. military installations comes from the private sector and warned that declining federal support for renewable energy deployment could slow adoption of technologies, such as closed-loop solar systems and battery storage.

Offshore Wind and Renewable Energy Development:

- Garamendi highlighted the success of DoW's Siting Clearinghouse in balancing national security needs with projects such as offshore wind energy.
- He warned that efforts to halt approved wind projects risk undermining a transparent process that has provided predictability for both the military and energy developers.
- Garamendi pressed Marks on delays in approving agreements for wind turbine projects, with Marks indicating that roughly a dozen proposals are currently moving through the review process.

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

- Vasquez asked Marks if he received “pushback” from DoW leadership to plan, procure or build closed-loop energy sources that include renewable energy.
 - Marks responded that no directives had been issued relative to renewable energy installations on military bases.
- Reps. **Carlos Gimenez** (R-FL-28) and **Jack Bergman** (R-MI-01) expressed skepticism toward wind and solar power on military bases.
- They argued that intermittent generation and the vulnerability of above-ground infrastructure make renewable energy less suitable than other energy sources for mission-critical operations.

Nuclear Energy and Advanced Reactor Technologies

- Reps. **Clay Higgins** (R-LA-03) and Gimenez advocated for expanded use of small modular nuclear reactors on military bases, describing nuclear power as a reliable and secure energy source.
- Gimenez raised the potential for high-temperature nuclear reactors to produce synthetic jet fuel.
- Reps. **Derek Schmidt** (R-KS-02) and Higgins highlighted the potential for deploying nuclear generation at U.S. military installations to improve energy independence and reliability.
- Rep. **Eric Sorensen** (D-IL-17) referenced ongoing nuclear research initiatives, including the JANUS program, as part of broader efforts to modernize energy and technology capabilities at military facilities.

Supply Chains for Energy Installations:

- Rep. **Derek Tran** (D-CA-45) stressed the importance of reducing reliance on components manufactured in China.
- Vasquez highlighted the growing role of advanced battery storage technologies in strengthening military installation resilience.

Infrastructure Resilience:

- Rep. **Sarah Elfreth** (D-MD-03) stressed the increasing cost of addressing stormwater management and sea-level rise at coastal bases and warned that climate-driven infrastructure challenges are competing with other military construction priorities.
- Sorensen raised concerns that staffing shortages and hiring freezes are weakening emergency response capabilities at installations such as the Rock Island Arsenal.
- Bergman and Higgins highlighted rising military construction costs and housing shortages for service members as central issues to be addressed.
- Vasquez stressed that improving energy reliability and infrastructure at military installations is essential to maintaining operational readiness.