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SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

STATEMENT OF
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(ENERGY, INSTALLATIONS, AND ENVIRONMENT)

BEFORE THE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

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Introduction

Chairwoman Hirono, Ranking Member Sullivan, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Department of the Navy's (DON) Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget request. The DON's Energy, Installations, and Environment portfolio is foundational to making sure that our Sailors, Marines, and Civilians are ready – able to do all that our Nation asks them to do.

Current Context

A ready Navy and Marine Corps responds whenever the Nation calls. Around the globe, around the clock, the Navy and Marine Corps are where they need to be, when they need to be there. They are able to do that because of the critical readiness enablers across the EI&E portfolio. Since we last met we have achieved some significant achievements across the portfolio that have happened because of partnerships across the federal family and among the communities and state and local partners that share in the places that we live, work, and train.

I would like to thank this committee for your support of the modernization of the Fallon Range Training Complex in Nevada, which will ensure that Naval Aviators and Navy SEALs have training ranges and facilities that provide them a realistic environment to train like they fight. Due to incredible efforts and commitment over many years across Congress, the Department of Interior, tribal, and state and local stakeholders, the Department of the Navy will increase the readiness of our warfighters while also prioritizing the stewardship and safety of the sacred environmental and cultural resources, and the health of the local economy. As we modernize the range in the coming years, in partnership with Congress, the DON will continue to meet its obligations as part of the community, while enabling the warfighting mission.

We will continue this effort in other critical regions as well. When I last testified on the DON's budget request, we were months into our response to the November 2021 spill of fuel at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility (Red Hill) in Hawaii. A year later, we have made significant progress as a Department of Defense (DOD), with the Secretary of Defense standing up the Red Hill Joint Task Force (JTF) to oversee the defueling of the Red Hill and charging the

DON with the closure of the facility. The DON is grateful for the attention and urgency that Congress provided as we responded to the contamination at Red Hill and as we continue our work. The DOD delivered its defueling plan July 1, 2022, and the DON delivered its closure plan November 1, 2022. As the JTF focuses on the safe and expeditious defueling of the Red Hill facility, DON is preparing for a similarly safe and expeditious closure of the Red Hill facility. Throughout this process, the DON is working closely with the JTF to ensure complementary actions and continuity of these intimately related efforts and to provide constant, clear communication with the community and other stakeholders. As the DON moves forward to permanently close Red Hill, we will remediate the remaining fuel contamination, conduct long-term monitoring to ensure that the water remains safe, and work with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Hawaii Department of Health. Additionally, we will engage with the local community to solicit input on the opportunities for non-fuel beneficial reuse of the Red Hill facility. With every action, we are prioritizing the health and safety of the people, environment, and communities in Oahu and look forward to continued productive and collaborative relationships with all stakeholders.

Strategic Priorities

Secretary Del Toro set forth guiding principles for the DON team to strengthen maritime dominance, build a culture of warfighting excellence, and enhance our strategic partnerships. These objectives support our National Defense Strategy and are the drivers of all that we do. In my capacity as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations, and Environment, I support Secretary Del Toro's guidance by focusing on three cross-cutting areas: Critical Infrastructure, Communities, and Climate Action. Across all three of these areas, Safety provides the foundation for all of our work. As the DON's Designated Agency Safety and Health Official, I am focused on reducing and eliminating occupational and off-duty accidents, injuries and illnesses while cultivating a learning culture that anticipates needs and enhances our safety culture, highlights programmatic shortfalls, and manages risk at the proper level. The DON is committed to sustaining a comprehensive safety and occupational health program that addresses a wide range of functions and missions in various complex environments.

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. Historically, the DON has accepted a significant level of risk in the resourcing of our installations; as a result, the DON infrastructure portfolio carries known, aggregated risk from many years of underinvestment in the sustainment and recapitalization of our facilities, structures, and utilities infrastructure. We assess that the DON's current facilities maintenance backlog currently stands as at nearly \$33.7 billion. To reduce this backlog, we are recalibrating our investment prioritization in a way that clearly values, links, and acknowledges the essential warfighting, readiness, and Quality of Life support that naval facilities provide. Simultaneously, we are consolidating functions and divesting infrastructure that is in poor condition or duplicative to ensure existing funding is focused in the most efficient, impactful way possible. This budget request represents an important first step in the DON's commitment to develop a 30-year infrastructure plan that anticipates and plans towards the needs, requirements, sustainment, and the future of these key platforms in our enterprise and the missions we support. This plan will incorporate many of our ongoing infrastructure initiatives across the organic industrial base and key and fleet concentration areas.

Facilities Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization (FSRM). Our FY 2024 request begins to demonstrate our commitment to long-term infrastructure investment. FY 2024 includes \$4.5 billion in FSRM funding for the Navy and \$1.2 billion for the Marine Corps to maintain the working order of our facilities and utility systems and prevent the premature degradation of mission-critical facilities. This year's budget request includes the replacement of the Halawa and Lehua Ave. waterlines at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, replacement of the Turner Road, Sumay Road, and Barrida water lines at Naval Base Guam, and sewer line repairs at MCAS Cherry Point. We are prioritizing our FSRM investments to maximize effectiveness and mission readiness. The Marine Corps' Facilities Investment Strategy leverages a newly developed Readiness Maximization Tool to promote a tier-based readiness approach to lifecycle management that reduces footprint while prioritizing investments for the most important facilities. After a period of analysis, this pathfinder program began in earnest at the start of FY 2023, and we will use the results of this initiative to inform a model for broader application.

Within our FSRM funding, our FY 2024 budget request includes \$228M for the Navy and \$112M for the Marine Corps to demolish obsolete infrastructure and reduce our current footprint, which will enable the DON to better prioritize existing our facilities sustainment funding across our most critical facilities. This budget also includes \$165M for the Navy and \$201M for the Marine Corps to repair and renovate housing for our unaccompanied Sailors and Marines at several installations.

Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP). As part of our long-range vision, our FY2024 budget request underscores our commitment to improving and optimizing the DON's organic depots, which includes our four public shipyards, Fleet Readiness Centers supporting the Naval Aviation Enterprise, and Marine Corps Depots and Support Facilities. Under the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP) we are committed to modernizing the Navy's four public shipyards to generate Fleet readiness and strengthen our Nation's security; we will construct and recapitalize dry docks to reconfigure infrastructure using industrial modeling and simulation, detailed engineering studies, and master planning, and modernize industrial plant equipment. In FY24, the Navy has budgeted \$209M in Facilities Restoration & Modernization funds to execute eight projects directly supporting the SIOP program, including structural and facility repairs at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, electrical and compressed air system repairs at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, and feeder cable replacement at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. The PB24 budget also includes approximately \$2.3 billion for SIOP military construction projects, including one new-start project to build the Electrical Backbone at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, and incremental funding for a Dry Dock Saltwater System at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, a Multi-Mission Drydock Extension at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, and Dry Dock 3 at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. The request also includes \$145 million in MILCON planning and design funds for future SIOP projects.

Military Construction. In total, the DON's FY 2024 budget request includes \$6 billion for 33 military construction projects for the Navy and Marine Corps. Through this request, the DON is investing in new platforms and technologies such as Aircraft Development and Maintenance Facilities at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maintenance Facility and Marine Air Group Headquarters at Cherry Point, Weapons Magazines at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, an

Aircraft Maintenance Hangar at Cherry Point, and a Communications Towers at Twenty-Nine Palms. We recognize that critical infrastructure at installations is more than the piers, hangars, runways, training and support facilities where our people work, train and live. It is also the energy, water, and utility systems that serve as the backbone of our operations. Our FY 2024 budget request includes a new water treatment plant at Marine Corps Base Quantico and a new electrical backbone at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.

Focus on the Indo-Pacific Region. The DON is prioritizing China as our pacing challenge, and we are focusing our infrastructure investments on this threat. Our FY 2024 budget request reflects the importance of the Indo-Pacific Region with laydown of Marine Corps forces in under the Guam Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI), new Marine Corps infrastructure in Australia, and Navy communication and missile integration facilities in Naval Base Guam. DPRI construction projects on Guam provide facilities to meet current and future training requirements. Our FY 2024 military construction request funds to construct Artillery Battery Facilities, a Recreation Center, Religious Ministry Services Facility, a Child Development Center, Training Center, a Consolidated Marine Expeditionary Brigade Headquarters, and the 9th Engineer Support Battalion Training Complex Finegayan, Guam. The FY 2024 request also includes \$26 million in MILCON Planning and Design in support of future construction requirements in Guam.

In addition to the DON's infrastructure investments in Guam, the Department of Defense (DoD) has several upcoming key posture actions in Guam and the CNMI that will require historic levels of military construction, and the DOD's military construction demands require a workforce more than twice as large as the local construction workforce in Guam. Our planned future military construction investments will further exacerbate labor shortages and pose serious challenges to our Indo-Pacific posture. To ensure that construction contractors have a stable H-2B visa workforce for current and future military construction projects in Guam, the DoD requires relief through at least December 31, 2029, from the H-2B visa temporary need requirement. While we appreciate the one-year extension in the FY 2023 NDAA that pushed the expiration date to December 31, 2024, the longer-term extension is needed to meet DoD's construction requirements.

In January 2023, I joined the Commandant of the Marine Corps for the reactivation ceremony of Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Blaz in Guam. Camp Blaz, the first newly constructed Marine Corps base in 70 years, will serve as a strategic hub in the Pacific and will promote regional security. Camp Blaz is a pointed example of how an installation enables warfighting readiness while supporting the local economy, preserving cultural heritage, enabling environmental resilience, and working together with the local community to achieve shared goals. Together with the government of Guam, the DON has modernized water treatment systems, improved roadways and bridges, upgraded power systems, studied the CHamoru culture, and enhanced natural habitats to protect endangered and threatened species.

Quality of Life Investments. Our FY 2024 budget request also builds new facilities to enhance the quality of life for our Sailors and Marines, including new Child Development Centers at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek and Naval Station Norfolk, and Bachelor Enlisted Quarters and Support Facility for our unaccompanied Marines stationed in Washington, DC. To support our military families, our FY 2024 budget request of \$641 million funds the operation and maintenance of 8,528 government owned units and 1,666 leased units worldwide. It also supports the continued construction of 103 homes for Navy and Marine Corps families in Guam, revitalizes and modernizes 53 enlisted homes at USFA Yokosuka, and funds needed repairs to historic homes at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C.

Housing for our Sailors, Marines and Families. Unaccompanied and family housing units – both government-owned and privatized – are critical to the health and safety of our Sailors, Marines and their families. The DON is grateful for Congress’s support for the Military Housing Privatization Initiative (MHPI) program to increase government personnel to oversee privatized housing projects. We have implemented all features of the Tenant Bill of Rights and continue to work with DOD and the other Services to implement more oversight improvements. As recommended by the Government Accountability Office’s recently-released report, *Military Housing: DOD Can Further Strengthen Oversight of Its Privatized Housing Program*, the DON is collaborating with the other military departments to implement recommendations in the report, to include focusing on the formal dispute resolution process, supplemental training, updating

policy and informational documents on the specific roles and responsibilities of the tenant advocates, among others. The DON is also working to complete workforce studies to determine the number of positions needed to oversee privatized military housing.

We are committed to maintaining resident trust, reinforcing DON oversight, and exercising active leadership and advocacy for our Sailors, Marines and their families. Over the past year, the DON Housing team has made great strides in moving the privatized housing program into the next phase of sustained oversight and dynamic leadership involvement. We are using the tools we have developed to perform better analysis of our processes, policies, and overall program to ensure higher levels of service and resident satisfaction. Lessons learned are also being applied to the DON's government-owned homes. We continue to review the current financial state of our privatization projects and their ability to sustain themselves in the future, and we believe that privatization continues to be an option to provide our families affordable and safe housing where demand is high and on-base housing shortfalls exist. Currently, the Navy is considering two additional MHPI family housing phases in these type of areas including in the Everett, Washington area and remote areas of Naval Air Station Fallon and Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake.

Communities

As we demonstrated with the reactivation of Camp Blaz, when the Navy and Marine Corps create an installation, facility, base or station, our Sailors, Marines, and families call it home. We recognize and take seriously that this is a shared home with those outside the fence line, which include residents, businesses, and the environment. As our people live, train, work, and operate, we form a connection and an opportunity to strengthen the resources and resilience for the entire community.

Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program (REPI). The DON continues to leverage the Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program (REPI) to partner with local governments and non-governmental organizations to preserve our national defense capabilities while simultaneously advancing the goals and objectives of partner organizations and leveraging shared resources. We are increasingly

utilizing REPI for projects with climate resilience benefits, while continuing to address traditional encroachment pressures, such as incompatible development and species and habitat concerns. DON's REPI efforts led to the execution of over \$24M awarded in support of natural resources management utilizing the Sikes Act authority and helped secure an additional investment of \$21.5M from the National Coastal Resilience Fund to support DON installation resilience. These proactive, collaborative partnerships will help improve installation and community resilience and reduce future regulatory constraints by supporting species recovery efforts and are expected to alleviate or reduce impacts to construction, training, modernization efforts, and operations. The DOD's recently-announced 2023 REPI Challenge includes several projects that near DON installations, to include: shoreline stabilization near Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia; invasive species management and reef preservation near Pacific Missile Range Facility Barking Sands and Marine Corps Base Hawaii; and habitat improvement and species management at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Naval Base Coronado, Naval Base Ventura County Point Mugu, Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach in California.

Partnering with the Local Community. Outside of our fence lines, the communities that host our Navy and Marine Corps installations continue to utilize the Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot (DCIP) program to fund community infrastructure projects that benefit local installations, enable the DON's warfighting mission, and provide support to our service members, and their families. Using 2022 DCIP grant funds, Onslow County in North Carolina will upgrade a runway at a local airport to benefit travel in southeastern North Carolina, including Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station New River, and Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. In Florida, a new water main will improve capacity and pressure for not only for Naval Station Mayport, but also the surrounding community where many of our Sailors, Marines, Civilians and their families live. Finally, the city of Newport News in Virginia will undertake a \$15 million project at the Harwood's Mill Reservoir Dam to increase flood protection for the entire community and ensure a reliable water supply to Naval Weapons Station Yorktown. In addition to supporting our communities to compete for DCIP grants, Navy and Marine Corps installations continue to look for ways to leverage the authorities granted by Congress. The DON continues to leverage Intergovernmental Support Agreements (IGSAs) to partner with a state or local government to obtain installation support services, which often

generates considerable savings for our installations. In January 2023, the Department of the Navy, along with the Department of the Army and Department of the Air Force, came together under a state-wide IGSA for the Texas Department of Transportation to provide operation and maintenance support military bases across the state, generating an overall estimated cost savings of 25 percent for the Department of Defense. The Navy and Marines Corps currently have 57 IGSA's in place, and we are on track to sign an additional 15 to 20 over the next year.

Environment and Mission Readiness. The DON is taking action at our installations and ranges across the world as we protect the environment as a strategic asset that supports our National Defense. Our FY 2024 budget request includes more than \$1 billion to fund environmental compliance environmental laws and regulations afloat and ashore; conserve and manage natural, cultural, and marine resources on our installations and ranges; conduct environmental planning and environmental consultation and permitting; continue investigations and cleanup on installations; implement the DON's ongoing per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) response strategy; sustainably manage and modernize our ranges and mitigate compatibility risks; and build environmental resiliency into our planning, operations, acquisitions, and installation management.

Through proactive environmental stewardship of installations and ranges, the DON delivers modern, agile, resilient, and sustainable training, testing, and operational capabilities. It is through our sustained efforts that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced in January 2023 that – after decades of collaborative conservation efforts – five species living on the Navy's San Clemente Island off the coast of California are now fully recovered and no longer require Endangered Species Act protection. This milestone serves as a tangible example of how the DON's responsible management of natural resources can preserve, protect, and conserve the natural environment while simultaneously reducing costs to the DON and enhancing our national security mission.

Chemicals of Emerging Concern. Together with our partners, the Department is working hard to protect our people and communities from chemicals of emerging concern, such as PFAS. The DON's FY 2024 request includes \$134 million to implement a comprehensive strategy to

prevent, manage and address known or potential releases of PFAS at Navy and Marine Corps installations. This includes testing drinking water and identifying, evaluating, and addressing PFAS releases resulting from DON activities and replacing AFFF in our facilities and mobile assets. The DON, along with all of DOD, supports EPA's recent actions to propose a regulatory drinking water standard for PFAS that will apply to all public water systems once final. We understand that there is currently a public comment process on this proposed nationwide drinking water rule, and we look forward to the clarity that a final regulatory drinking water standard for PFAS will provide. In the interim, we are assessing the actions we can take to be prepared to incorporate EPA's final regulatory standard into our drinking water and cleanup programs, such as reviewing our existing data and conducting additional sampling where necessary. We understand that EPA expects to publish the final standard by the end of 2023. The Navy and Marine Corps are developing AFFF replacement plans that provide information on the locations and amounts of AFFF that will need to be replaced in facilities and mobile assets, as well as the contract vehicles that will be used, costs and schedules.

Climate Action

Scientists indicate that this is a decisive decade for climate action – indeed, it is a decisive decade for our military as well we face the pacing challenge of China and the dangerous transboundary threat of climate change. Climate change makes the world a more volatile place: it brings extreme weather events, more humanitarian crises, and heightened friction around essential natural resources. A more volatile world calls on the United States Navy and Marine Corps. These calls increase demands on our forces while simultaneously impacting the capacity to respond to those demands. This threat impacts not only where they are needed, but how and what drives the demand for operations. It is impacting the way our Sailors and Marines train, equip, and deter aggression. If they are called to do so, it will change how they fight and win.

Climate Action 2030. For the Navy and Marine Corps, climate readiness is mission readiness. The DON is operating under *Climate Action 2030* to create a force that can operate and succeed in any environment. We are focused on building resilience and reducing the national security threat of climate change, and we view climate readiness as a tactical, operational, and strategic enabler for our Sailors and Marines. To create a warfighting

advantage, we are increasing the resilience of our bases and making our logistics chains, structures, power grids, fuel distribution systems and water lines more survivable. We are also leveraging science to seek innovative solutions, partnering with industry and other government entities, and investing responsibly to achieve mission readiness, jointly with our partners in Congress.

Installation Resilience. Navy and Marine Corps installations are constantly challenged by natural hazards like extreme rainfall, drought, and coastal erosion. As directed by the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, the Navy and Marine Corps are adding a resilience component to the master plans of major installations, leveraging the lessons learned from Parris Island and San Diego. The DON has also completed resilience studies on smaller installations such as the United States Naval Academy, where impacts from storm surges and high-tide flooding affect daily operations through closures of flooded roads, sidewalks, and building entry points. Because many naval installations are coastal by the nature of our service, sea level rise and extreme weather events have a direct and forceful impact on the Navy's and Marine Corps' infrastructure and installation operations. We are focused on applying updated standards in the Unified Facilities Criteria to our infrastructure, conducting training exercises and planning processes that harden and support quick recovery for our installations and facilities extreme weather events and energy disruptions.

The DON's FY 2024 budget request will increase the energy resilience of our installations by modernizing energy infrastructure, deploying microgrids, supporting electrification and the transition to zero-emission vehicles, increasing third-party financing capabilities, and making energy systems cyber-secure. The Navy and Marine Corps continue to leverage the Title 10 authorities granted by Congress to increase the energy and water reliability and resilience of our installations. We currently have \$3.6B in awarded third-party financing contracts and ongoing efforts to replace and modernize failing critical infrastructure through third-party financing. By investing in state-of-the-art systems and modern infrastructure, the DON is positioning our installations to prevent, recover, and survive a prolonged loss of electrical service from natural or manmade events. We continue to test the energy security of our installations through Energy Resilience Readiness Exercises (ERREs), with six conducted in 2022 at Naval Station Rota;

Naval Air Station Kingsville, Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Joint Base Charleston, Naval Magazine Indian Island and Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. Our FY 2024 budget includes funding to conduct at least five EREEs at installations across the world.

We are also partnering with communities and state entities to reduce our climate impact and make our installations more climate-resilient. In January 2023, the California Energy Commission approved nearly \$2 million in funding for Navy Electric Vehicle Pilot Program and the Electrification Blueprint Studies for three Navy and three Marine Corps installations in California, which will generate cost savings, and mission and community success. In September 2022, Navy Region Southwest and the Port of San Diego signed an IGSA memorializing a first-of-its-kind partnership that will provide millions of dollars for further electrification efforts for both Naval Base San Diego and the Port of San Diego, and improve air quality and public health on and around the San Diego Bay Working Waterfront. As other states join California in adopting Low-Carbon Fuel Standards and other policies to transition to cleaner energy sources and reduce greenhouse gas, the Navy and Marine Corps will look for more opportunities to collaborate and work together to enhance our energy resilience as one community.

Contested Logistics. Operating in a contested environment requires our shore installations and logistics enterprise to be completely integrated into the fight: a battlespace with persistent, agile, and flexible naval combatants. The Marine Corps' recently-published Installation and Logistics 2030 is looking at sustaining the force in the 21st century, recognizing that the operating environment is contested across all domains and at global scale every day. The Marine Corps is making changes across the tactical, operational, and strategic levels, and we are also making installations ready for the contested environment with a focus on energy, utility, and climate resiliency, and the ability to recover rapidly after attack. The Navy continues to employ the principles of the *Chief of Naval Operations' Navigation Plan 2022*, the *Transforming Naval Logistics for Great Power Competition* strategy and the *Navy Global Strategy Ashore* to enable and improve Fleet readiness, to transform logistics to better sustain the Fleet, and to sustain the momentum for evolving wartime support across the sustainment kill-chain, from the industrial base, the inter-theater, the intra-theater, and to the point of need.

Operational Energy. Our Navy and Marine Corps operational forces need resilient and reliable energy in order to perform their mission. The DON's FY 2024 budget continues DON's operational energy investments to target greater combat efficacy, Integrated Power/Propulsion and energy storage, unmanned systems endurance and payload, and fuel distribution capabilities to support the operational requirements of Contested Logistics, Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations and Distributed Maritime Operations. Reflecting the challenges of contested logistics and guidance from the National Defense Strategy, the DON will ensure rigorous energy-informed requirements for new capabilities and then sustain those requirements throughout our acquisition decision-making. To make our operational forces more lethal and more effective, we are focused on extending the operational reach of current and future weapons systems through more-effective use of energy; reducing energy consumption and external energy logistics requirements to forward deployed strike groups and expeditionary units; increasing energy resilience of forward bases, supply depots, and cooperative security locations; increasing the effective use, conversion, storage, distribution, and control of energy of our of future weapons and sensors onto platforms; and fostering an energy culture in our Sailors and Marines through policy, training, and education.

DON's budget request invests more than \$100 million on improving the energy efficiency of our existing operational platforms and propulsion systems, and this funding is targeted to gain capability and reduce logistics supply requirements for deployed forces through digital flight planning tools, aircraft drag reduction technologies and hybrid propulsion. We are also upgrading the fuel efficiency of the Marine Corps Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR) fleet, which will produce significant cost savings over the life of the MTVRs and improve combat effectiveness by reducing logistics requirements, increasing expeditionary capability and extending operational range. The FY2024 budget request also funds efforts to improve integration of weather and ocean forecasts into ship routing, ship response and propulsion efficiency planning, and Refueling at Sea logistics planning, as well as prediction of hazardous and extreme weather events and trends for climate adaptation, resilience, and mitigation.

With an eye towards future operations, our FY 2024 request supports the advanced mobility fuels program, which is responsible for the development and sustainment of qualification protocols, fuel testing, analysis and coordination between Navy, other DoD entities, industry, and international partners to qualify the use of Low Carbon Tactical Fuels for Navy aircraft and ships. This effort will position the Navy to procure low carbon tactical fuels, ensure operational flexibility, and take advantage of reductions in life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions without impacting platform performance or durability. The Navy is also funding the assessment, development, maturation, and transition of batteries and fuel cells, thermal management, and engine and airframe efficiency technologies to increase the mission capability of Naval aircraft; increasing range and payload capacity of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) , significantly reduce time and cost to optimize power and thermal solutions to current aircraft, increase emergency capability, reduce total ownership costs and future non-recurring engineering costs for aircraft batteries, and increase aircraft range and time on station.

Nature-Based Solutions and Sustainability. Together with new technology, we recognize the opportunity for nature-based solutions to enhance our resilience and mission readiness for training and operations. Our FY 2024 budget request supports the development, planning, design, and execution of future environmental resilience projects including shoreline stabilization and erosion mitigations. As we pursue natural resources-based solutions to increase carbon sequestration, we are looking to address erosion and sea level rise through riverine and coastal shoreline restoration, to decrease wildland fire through habitat management and fuels reduction; and to increase water retention through vegetation enhancement/restoration and soil management conservation. The DON is also supporting the development of offshore wind energy, and we are committed finding solutions that support clean, efficient energy development for the community in a manner that is compatible with national defense requirements. To date, the DON has collaborated with BOEM and industry to advance offshore wind leases in support of potential renewable energy generation.

As required by the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, the DON is conducting a pilot program to evaluate the use of sustainable building materials in military construction. Our FY 2024 budget includes two net-zero building pilot projects, construction of

a Child Development Center at Joint Expeditionary Base, Little Creek-Fort Story, and planning and design for the F-35 depot maintenance facility at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. We have partnered with the other Services to develop consistent program criteria and evaluate state-of-the-art sustainable building material technologies and approaches for their implementation. We remain committed to achieving the best value for the taxpayer and see the use of sustainable building materials as a pathway to maximize resilience and cost-effectiveness.

Conclusion

Thank you for your steadfast commitment to our Sailors, Marines, Civilians and their families and for your purposeful focus on our FY 2024 budget request. I look forward to our continued partnership and dialogue as we work together to ensure the Navy and Marine Corps remain the world's greatest maritime fighting force.