

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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<http://oversight.house.gov>

May 9, 2016

The Honorable Ashton B. Carter
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Department of Defense's efforts to ensure our nation's military bases are protected from a power grid failure are critically important to national security. There are many military installations in the United States that receive primary power from civilian grids. In the event a natural disaster or man-made blackout disables the primary power source, these bases could be left unsecured and highly vulnerable. As the Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently concluded, this problem is even more pressing in remote military bases.¹

While the Committee is encouraged by DOD's progress to ensure its installations have adequate backup power, more can be done.² As GAO noted:

The military services have taken reasonable steps, such as conducting studies on the incorporation of intermittent renewable energy sources and identifying alternative energy solutions, to overcome grid stability issues and high energy costs. However, the military services remain at risk for potentially underfunding energy infrastructure investments because there is no clarity regarding the role that energy security plays when evaluating a project for funding.³

To help the Committee better understand this issue, please provide Committee staff with a briefing by no later than May 23, 2016, on installations with no independent backup power

¹ U.S. GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, GAO-16-164, DEFENSE INFRASTRUCTURE: IMPROVEMENT NEEDED IN ENERGY REPORTING AND SECURITY FUNDING AT INSTALLATIONS WITH LIMITED CONNECTIVITY (Jan. 2016), available at <http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/674992.pdf>.

² See, e.g., *Hearing on the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2017: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Readiness and Management Support of the S. Comm. on Armed Services*, 114th Cong. (2016) (statement of Katherine G. Hammack, Ass't Sec'y of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment), available at http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Hammack_04-12-16.pdf.

³ *Supra* note 1, at 31.

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sources, and whether each such installation has an energy security plan in the event of a power outage.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal investigative committee in the U.S. House of Representatives. Pursuant to House Rule X, the Committee has authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time.”

Please contact Drew Feeley of the Committee’s majority staff at (202) 225-5074, or Valerie Shen of the minority staff at (202) 225-5051 with any questions about this request. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jason Chaffetz
Chairman



Ron DeSantis
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security



Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member



Cynthia M. Lummis
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Interior

cc: The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security

The Honorable Brenda L. Lawrence, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior