

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY  
THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION,  
VETERANS AFFAIRS, and RELATED AGENCIES,  
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**STATEMENT OF**

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**BEFORE THE**

**SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY**  
**CONSTRUCTION,**  
**VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES**

**OF THE**

**COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**

**MAY 14, 2026**

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Chairman Boozman, Ranking Member Ossoff, and distinguished Members of this Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about the status and priorities of the Marine Corps Military Construction (MILCON) program and readiness initiatives. On behalf of the Commandant and all Marines, I thank the Committee for its continued support in providing the resources required to ensure your Marine Corps is ready to be first-to-fight. I am grateful for your consistent support, and my goal today is to continue the vital conversation we began last year regarding the foundational role our bases and stations play in our nation's ability to project power and deter conflict.

Make no mistake, the character of warfare has changed. Our installations are no longer administrative sanctuaries far from the front lines; they are now firmly in the contested space. The discussion surrounding MILCON and facilities sustainment is not a garrison conversation about infrastructure management. It is a warfighting conversation about operational readiness and our strategic posture. Every dollar invested in our facilities is a direct investment in the combat effectiveness of your Marine Corps and the broader Joint Force. Our bases and stations are the primary logistical hubs from which we will generate forces and readiness, and they enable the "Three Principal Moves" that every operational plan depends upon: Force Mobilization, Force Closure, and Force Sustainment. These are concrete, physical actions that are directly tied to the readiness and resilience of our installations. Force Mobilization occurs at our bases and stations in the homeland and around the world to rapidly aggregate our Marines and materiel to mobilize and address the needs of our Nation. Force Closure is the systematic assembly and composition of the force, linking personnel with their equipment and initial supplies to close a combat-credible force in the desired area and theater of operations. Finally, Force Sustainment relies on a robust, dispersed, and survivable network of installations and prepositioned materiel sites, both at home and abroad, to support our Marines and Sailors for the duration of the fight.

Our bases are the launchpads for mobilization, the nodes for closure, and the bedrock of sustainment. No amount of planning excellence matters if our installations are not ready to both deploy and receive forces. Our bases, posts, and stations are no longer secure rear areas and sanctuaries; they are the front lines and decisive terrain. The first shots of the next war may not be fired in the first-island chain or Taiwan Strait; they may be a cyberattack on our power grid, a disinformation campaign targeting military families, or a drone swarm at one of our installations.

Without predictable, sufficient, and timely support to ensure they are modernized and resilient, our ability to fight and win anywhere in the world is put at unacceptable risk. Therefore, this year's budget request is not merely a list of construction projects. It is our plan to underwrite the operational readiness of the Joint Force by ensuring these "Three Principal Moves" are not just concepts in a briefing, but executable realities in a crisis.

## **Threats and Challenges**

The strategic competition with our near-peer and peer adversaries is not a future problem, nor is it confined to distant theaters. The homeland is no longer a sanctuary, and our bases and stations are already under attack as the first layer of contested terrain in a global conflict. Our adversaries are pursuing a whole-of-society strategy to gain advantage, and we are witnessing a persistent, multi-faceted campaign to surveil our forces, probe our defenses, and disrupt our ability to mobilize. This campaign is being waged through new technologies and old-fashioned forms of collection, and it demands a new level of vigilance and investment.

### ***UAS Incursions***

The proliferation of inexpensive and increasingly capable Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) has fundamentally erased the physical and psychological barrier of the fence line, turning every one of our installations into a potential target for adversary targeting or intelligence collection. Make no mistake, the consistent and growing number of UAS incursions over our installations and ranges is not a trivial nuisance. We saw more than 170 UAS incursions at our Marine Corps installations between 2025 and 2026. And while we don't know if these incursions were hostile or malicious, the sheer ease with which they occurred means we must treat every single one as a deliberate attempt by an adversary to surveil our forces and assess our vulnerabilities. This potential threat is precisely why our installations must be regarded as warfighting platforms. To counter this pervasive threat, we are moving beyond traditional physical security and investing in a layered, "defense-in-depth" approach.

Our primary effort to address this threat in support of our bases and stations is the fielding of a comprehensive Installation-Counter Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (I-CsUAS) capability. This is not a single piece of equipment, but a network of sensors and capabilities designed to detect, track, identify, and defeat hostile drones operating in the airspace above our installations. This system-of-systems is essential to restoring the integrity of our bases and

stations and protecting our critical assets. Our Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) request includes a planned \$1.4 billion investment in the Marine Corps' Ground Based Air Defense (GBAD) program, of which \$45 million is dedicated to the continued fielding of I-CsUAS at our bases and stations. In addition to supporting the I-CsUAS program, this planned investment in GBAD supports other key efforts to modernize the Marine Corps ground-based air defense capabilities, including the Medium Range Intercept Capability (MRIC), the Marine Air Defense Integrated System Family of Systems, and the Organic-Counter small Unmanned Aircraft System (O-CsUAS). We are actively fielding and improving these capabilities, and sustained support for this program will be required to ensure our bases, stations, and formations are adequately defended against the airborne threats of the modern battlefield.

### ***Unauthorized Installation Access Attempts***

Simultaneously, we are countering a concerning number of foreign nationals attempting to gain unauthorized access to our installations. In the past 12 months, we have encountered over 8,500 foreign nationals at our installation access control points. Not all these individuals are lost tourists who have made a wrong turn. Hidden among these thousands of access attempts and the bustle of our installation access points, a portion of these individuals are conducting a coordinated and deliberate effort to test our access control procedures, identify security vulnerabilities, and gather intelligence on force movements and readiness. Whether by attempting to tailgate authorized vehicles, posing as delivery drivers, or using other forms of social engineering, some of these individuals are systematically probing our physical defenses. This is the ground-level execution of our adversaries' whole-of-society approach, bringing the strategic competition directly to our gates and treating our installations as a primary intelligence target.

We are not waiting to be attacked; we are actively countering this threat in close partnership with federal law enforcement and our own counterintelligence specialists. We are treating each of these incidents not as an isolated event, but as a data point in a broader intelligence collection effort to understand the adversary's methods and objectives. This threat underscores the urgent need to continue investing in the modernization of our installation security infrastructure. This includes physical barriers and infrastructure, and our greatest single investment in this area in the FY27 request is a project supporting the Main Gate Entry Control Point at Marine Corps Base Hawaii. The planned \$49.3 million MILCON investment will update

facilities at the installation's main gate, improving physical security and access control measures at one of our key bases in the Indo-Pacific region. Other efforts underway across our bases and stations include the implementation of advanced vetting systems, modernized access control points with standoff detection capabilities, and increased access to the analytical tools required to fuse information from multiple sources across the interagency. Protecting our forces where they live and train requires a defense-in-depth that can identify and stop the coordinated efforts before they reach our critical assets. In line with our broader efforts to modernize and recapitalize our aging facilities inventory, our efforts to improve installation physical security, vetting technology, and access control measures will require sustained investment and support.

### ***Cyber Threats***

Our ability to project power is highly dependent on our digital infrastructure, and our adversaries are constantly probing our networks and critical systems. The network is now a warfighting platform, and the Marine Corps is engaged in constant contact with our adversaries in cyberspace. Malicious cyber actors, sponsored by our peer competitors, are persistently targeting our information networks, our logistics systems, and, most concerningly, the industrial control systems that manage the flow of power and water on our installations. A successful intrusion that degrades our ability to communicate, process data, or deploy forces could have the same operational effect as a physical attack. A single vulnerability in our supply chain software or a compromised power grid substation could cripple our ability to execute our mission, preventing us from mobilizing the force, achieving force closure, and sustaining our Marines in the fight.

To that end, this budget request dedicates a combined \$132.4 million in MILCON funds to update the digital backbone of our sustainment networks. This investment supports critical communication facility upgrades at Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany and Blount Island Command, the strategic engines of our global supply chain and Maritime Prepositioning Force. Updating the Information Command, Control, Communications, and Computers (IC4) infrastructure at these facilities contributes directly to the survivability of our supply chain, as our ability to project power is only as strong as the network that supports it. By modernizing these vital sustainment nodes, we ensure our supply chain data remains encrypted, segmented, and secure from malicious intrusions, guaranteeing we can securely command, control, and rapidly deploy combat-credible forces even in a highly contested cyber domain.

As part of our broader cybersecurity efforts, we are fundamentally reshaping our approach to network security across the Marine Corps Installations and Logistics Enterprise. We are moving away from a perimeter-based defense model and aggressively implementing a Zero Trust architecture. This approach assumes our network is already compromised and enforces strict identity verification for every user and device attempting to access resources, thereby containing and isolating potential intruders. This architectural shift is underpinned by our investment in modernizing our IC4 infrastructure. This is not just a routine IT upgrade; by building a more resilient, defensible, and data-centric network, we ensure that we can command and control the force and execute our logistics in the face of persistent, sophisticated cyberattacks, safeguarding our ability to project power from our installations to the battlefield.

### ***Economic and Regulatory Factors***

Last year, I testified before this subcommittee and described the corrosive effects that over twenty years of war had on our ability to build and maintain the installations our warfighters require. I am here today to report that, unfortunately, the problem has persisted. The Marine Corps currently carries over \$28.7 billion in deferred maintenance. With your support, we are making headway in addressing this challenge. However, even as resourcing has increased in successive years, our efforts continue to be hampered by a severe degradation of our construction buying power caused by economic and regulatory factors. On one hand, the rising costs of construction materials and skilled labor have continued to drive our projects estimates higher, and on the other hand costs are increased by well-intentioned but paralyzing legal and regulatory requirements. Complex contractor bonding requirements and onerous federal contract rules add massive financial premiums and multi-year delays to our projects. We are paying significantly more and getting less. If we are to treat our bases as combat platforms, we require the flexibility to build and maintain them at the speed of relevance. We are managing a state of irreversible decline across many of our facilities, accepting risk that directly translates to operational vulnerability. We cannot project power from a crumbling foundation.

The reality is that our pacing threat, the People's Republic of China, is executing a deliberate, long-term infrastructure plan at breathtaking speed. They do not navigate the labyrinth of regulatory friction that we impose upon ourselves. In this strategic competition, time is a finite resource. Every project delayed by red tape and every dollar lost to administrative overhead is a gift to an adversary who is already outpacing us in key industrial areas. We are, in

effect, slowing ourselves down. To accelerate our efforts, we are taking a hard look at our own engineering standards, specifically the Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC). While designed to ensure safety and standardization, overly rigid UFC requirements often prevent us from leveraging the speed and cost-savings of the modern commercial market. We must be authorized and encouraged to employ innovative materials and advanced construction methods like additive manufacturing and modular construction which meet the operational intent of Federal design requirements but at a significantly lower cost and faster pace. We need to take a flying leap into modern construction practices, maximizing every taxpayer dollar to build the resilient foundation the Joint Force requires for the peer fight.

### **The FY27 Budget Request**

Our FY27 budget request is a deliberate, data-driven plan designed to resource our most critical needs and warfighting priorities. Our MILCON request for FY27 is \$1.4 billion, and every project and dollar requested is aimed at building a more lethal, resilient, and ready force capable of executing its mission in the most demanding environments. The Marine Corps is fully committed to fiscal stewardship, most recently demonstrated by earning a clean audit opinion for a historic third consecutive year. Our fiscal discipline ensures that every dollar entrusted to us is maximized to enhance the readiness of the force and a return on your investment of trust and treasure.

### ***Barracks 2030 Update***

Our most lethal weapon system is the United States Marine. The readiness of our Corps begins and ends with the individual Marine, and that readiness is directly impacted by the environment in which they live. We have a sacred responsibility to provide our Marines with safe, clean, and modern housing. This is not a matter of comfort, but of combat effectiveness. A Marine who is not forced to deal with a failing HVAC system, mold, or inadequate living conditions is a Marine who can remain focused on their training, their unit, and their readiness to deploy. For too long, we have accepted risk in the condition of our barracks, and our Marines have borne the cost. To correct this, we developed a holistic strategy called Barracks 2030. This is not simply a construction and renovation program; it is a comprehensive effort to bring all Marine Corps barracks up to modern standards. It involves not only building new, but also divesting failing facilities, renovating existing structures, and professionalizing the management

and oversight of our entire housing inventory to ensure we provide our Marines with the living conditions they deserve. This program is our number one priority.

To that end, our FY27 budget request includes over \$6.97 billion in FSRM funds to accelerate Barracks 2030 and deliver on our promise to your Marines. These funds will directly address some of our most problematic facilities, and are critical to restore existing barracks, address maintenance backlogs, and ensure the long-term viability of the facilities our Marines call home. Barracks 2030 is the primary vehicle to reverse the decline in our unaccompanied housing inventory and provide our warfighters with the quality of life they deserve. It is a direct investment in the resilience and lethality of the individual Marine.

### ***Setting the Theater***

Any conflict in the Indo-Pacific will be a logistics-intensive fight given the tyranny of distance. Our ability to deter conflict in the Indo-Pacific hinges on the existence of a distributed, resilient, and lethal posture west of the International Date Line. "Setting the Theater" means having the bases, supplies, and agreements in place *before* a crisis begins. It ensures that our forward-deployed forces can act as a credible deterrent, ready to execute their missions from the first day of a conflict. The investments we make in the Pacific are the most tangible signals of our commitment to our allies and our resolve against our adversaries. Our planned investments in Hawaii and Australia are the centerpiece of our efforts to Set the Theater in this year's MILCON request.

In Hawaii, our request supports key projects that improve our ability to train and deploy Marines aligned to the Indo-Pacific. We plan to invest \$76.6 million in the long-term success of the 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment by providing the facilities required to continue training and experimentation to ensure victory in the future fight. We are investing a further \$183.4 million in other facilities aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii to provide increased physical security and efficient operations aboard the installation and air station. In Australia, we are requesting funds for projects that support Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D) and our forward posture in the Indo-Pacific. The \$80.9 million request supports the construction of aviation and maintenance facilities that will provide enhanced support to MRF-D and the vital training we conduct with the Australian military. Our posture is a network, and through burden sharing and continued bilateral training we are strengthening that network with one of our closest allies. Each of these investments strengthens our interoperability and collective defense capacity.

### ***Force Design and Support for the Joint Fight***

A modernized force cannot generate combat power from legacy infrastructure. The Marine Corps is in the midst of Force Design, a once-in-a-generation transformation, divesting from platforms and capabilities that are ill-suited for a peer-level conflict and investing in the systems required to win in the contested environments of the 21st century. Force Design is essential to our role as the nation's crisis response force and as a critical partner in the Joint Force. However, the fielding of these new systems—from aircraft to ground vehicles—will be a hollow investment if we fail to build the modern, specialized facilities required to house, maintain, and deploy them.

Our FY27 budget request makes targeted investments to ensure our installations keep pace with our modernization, both in terms of platforms and the training requirements of our Marines. A portion of this request is dedicated to supporting our transition to a 5th-generation tactical air fleet and the next generation of heavy-lift aircraft, both of which are foundational to the Marine Corps' support to the Joint Force. In total, over \$217 million is requested to support maintenance and sustainment requirements of the new F-35 and CH-53K platforms at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. We are also modernizing the facilities that generate readiness for the individual Marine, with \$234.9 million of our MILCON request dedicated to training, operational, and storage facilities aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

This budget request also dedicates resources to ensuring our sustainment networks are resilient, modernized, and integrated with the Joint Force. \$86.4 million in this year's request is dedicated to communication facility upgrades at Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, the home of Marine Corps Logistics Command (LOGCOM). LOGCOM supports Marines and elements of Joint Force around the world every single day. They are a key component of the Marine Corps' distribution network at home and abroad, and these communication facility upgrades will enable them to support the increasingly resilient and dispersed operations of the Marine Corps and Joint Force into the future. Finally, this budget request includes \$46 million to complete communications infrastructure modernization at Blount Island Command, the strategic engine of our Maritime Prepositioning Force. Through management of our afloat stockpiles of equipment and supplies, Blount Island Command plays a critical role in helping our Marines overcome the tyranny of distance in the Indo-Pacific. These infrastructure upgrades will ensure that Blount

Island Command has the resources and tools required to support the rapid closure of a combat-credible force anywhere on the globe.

### **Marine and Family Readiness**

While we focus on modernizing our infrastructure for a peer fight, we must never lose sight of the foundation of our combat power: our Marines and the families who support them. A Marine who is worried about the safety of their child, the quality of their children's education, or their ability to afford groceries is a Marine who cannot be fully focused on training hard and preparing to fight and win. Therefore, these key Marine and family readiness programs are not separate from our preparations for conflict; they are core component of deployment readiness. We are taking deliberate, positive steps to strengthen these programs that directly enhance the resilience, retention, and readiness of our force.

### ***Childcare***

One of our most critical efforts in supporting the family is to ensure every Marine has access to affordable, high-quality childcare. This is a fundamental readiness issue. A lack of reliable childcare is a stressor on our Marines and their families and serves as a direct impediment to unit readiness, disproportionately affecting our dual-working couples and making it harder to retain talented Marines. When a Marine feels they must decide between their military duties and caring for their child, it creates an impossible choice that ripples across the entire command. For this reason, we make it a priority to provide our Marines with the peace of mind that comes from knowing their children are in a safe and enriching environment, allowing them to remain focused on training, deployment, and mission success. To meet this challenge, we are executing a multi-faceted strategy through our Child Development Centers (CDCs) and community-based programs. This is not a single-threaded solution but a comprehensive effort to increase capacity and options for our families. We are investing in new, modern CDCs to replace aging infrastructure and increase the number of available spaces on our installations. Simultaneously, we are expanding our network of quality-certified community-based providers, giving our families more flexibility. To ensure this care remains affordable, we are leveraging fee assistance programs that help offset the high cost of childcare in many of the areas where our Marines are stationed. Given that many of our childcare providers are also military spouses, we have streamlined the transition between CDCs for those conducting a permanent change of

station with their Marine, increasing retention in our childcare workforce and improving spousal employment. These combined initiatives are designed to systematically reduce CDC wait times, expand access to care, and ensure that our Marines have the support they need to focus on their mission.

### ***Department of War Education Activity Schools***

Our commitment to the well-being of the Marine family extends directly to the education of our children. For a force that is often asked to relocate every few years in service to our country, educational stability is a paramount concern and a key factor in a family's decision to continue their service. Our enduring partnership with the Department of War Education Activity (DoWEA) is the cornerstone of our effort to meet this need. DoWEA schools, located on our installations around the world, consistently rank among the best in the nation, providing a world-class education that eases the turbulent transition of a permanent change of station. This provides a sense of stability that is invaluable, allowing our Marines to focus on their mission knowing their children are receiving a superb and consistent education, no matter where the needs of the Corps take them. However, a high standard of education must be supported by modern, safe, and effective learning environments. Many of the school facilities on our installations are decades old and require sustained investment to meet the needs of a 21st-century curriculum. A modern school is a cornerstone of a healthy installation community and a powerful signal to our families that we are invested in their future, ensuring long-term health and readiness of the force.

### ***Commissaries***

We recognize that financial readiness is a key, and often overlooked, component of overall warfighter readiness. A Marine facing financial stress at home cannot be fully concentrated on the complexities of their mission, the maintenance of their equipment, or leading their fellow Marines. The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) provides a powerful, non-pay benefit that directly counters this stressor by providing tangible savings on groceries that meaningfully improve the financial security of our Marines and their families. This is a critical tool that stretches a paycheck, builds household resilience, and reduces a major source of distraction for our warfighters. To ensure our commissaries remain effective, we must support the facilities where our Marines access this key benefit. The value of the commissary is directly tied to the accessibility and quality of the stores themselves. Many of our commissaries are aging, and like any other piece of critical infrastructure, they require investment to remain

efficient and serviceable. We are therefore committed to supporting DeCA's efforts to modernize its stores across our installations. Investing in modern, reliable commissary facilities will help ensure this key benefit is not eroded by inefficient operations.

### **Where We Can Improve, With Your Support**

While adequate funding is the essential fuel for everything we do, we also recognize that the authorities granted to us by Congress are what turn those resources into results. Smart, flexible authorities allow us to be better stewards of taxpayer dollars, operate with greater speed and efficiency, and generate readiness more effectively. We have seen tremendous value in the authorities granted by Section 2835 of the Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act which has facilitated the "repair by replacement" pilot program. In many cases, our existing facilities, particularly our legacy barracks, are in such a state of disrepair that traditional renovation is no longer a cost-effective solution. Pouring funds into a failing structure with outdated systems often amounts to throwing good money after bad. The authority to replace these structures rather than repair them has proven to be a more efficient use of taxpayer dollars, delivering modern, sustainable facilities with a longer lifespan and lower long-term operating costs. Making these "repair by replacement" authorities permanent would ensure that we retain another invaluable tool to accelerate the modernization of our installations and ensure our investments deliver the greatest possible return in readiness and resilience.

### **Conclusion**

The FY27 Budget Request is an investment in deterrence. It is a tangible and necessary component of our national strategy to prevent conflict by signaling our readiness and resolve. Bases, airfields, ports, fuel farms, warehouses, training areas, and all the associated supporting infrastructure are what translate strategy into operational reality. We need to look at our infrastructure not as representing surplus from which we can draw funds needed elsewhere, but rather, as direct investments in strategy, as critical as any kinetic delivering weapons systems. Our installations are strategy poured into concrete, steel and geography. Therefore, every dollar requested in this budget is directly tied to the combat effectiveness of your Marine Corps and its ability to execute the mobilization, closure, and sustainment of combat-credible forces anywhere in the world. Every barracks we modernize is a direct investment in the resilience and readiness

of the individual Marine. Every airfield we strengthen and communications node we upgrade contributes to our ability to project power at the time and place of our choosing. Every facility we harden and capability we disperse enables the combat endurance and staying power required to prevail in a high-end fight. Make no mistake, our adversaries are watching. They measure our commitment not just by the weapons we field, but by the posture from which we field them. A ready and resilient force, enabled by modern and defensible installations, is one of the most powerful deterrents we can display. We are keenly aware of the fiscal challenges our nation faces, and we are committed to being responsible stewards of every dollar you entrust to us. We look forward to continuing this vital conversation and working in partnership with this subcommittee. Your support provides the foundation upon which your Marines stand ready to answer the nation's call. Thank you, and Semper Fidelis.