RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

MR. JORDAN GILLIS
PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR INSTALLATIONS, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONNMENT, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SECOND SESSION, 116TH CONGRESS

ON LAND BASED RANGES: BUILDING MILITARY READINESS WHILE PROTECTING NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

FEBRUARY 12, 2020

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Chairman Garamendi, Ranking Member Lamborn, and Members of the Subcommittee: I would like to thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Army's Range Readiness program and status with you.

Land is among the most important resources to accomplish Army training. It serves as the foundation needed to provide Commanders and units the maneuver space and weapons range complexes needed to execute individual, crew, collective, and unit training requirements that support combined arms training strategies for unit operational training and programs of instruction at Army institutional locations.

The Army ensures readiness of training lands and range infrastructure through its Sustainable Range Program (SRP). The SRP consists of four key components that collectively ensures range readiness. The Range Operations component ensures efficient operations and use of Army ranges through effective management and maintenance. The Range Development and Modernization programs ensure that range designs, modifications, new construction, and land acquisitions meet current and evolving doctrine and training strategies while adapting to technological improvements of weapon systems. Finally, the Integrated Training Area Management (ITAM) program, ensures that the Army's existing training land assets continue to support Commanders' training needs through land repair, reconditioning, and reconfiguration.

The key drivers of Army training land requirements are Department of Defense guidance, evolving Joint and Army doctrine, training strategies, and modernization. Those factors drove the Army to invest heavily in training range readiness starting in the early 2000s. Since 2004, the Army invested approximately $3.5 billion in military construction projects that have modernized, improved and acquired Army ranges and training lands. In that period of time, the Army successfully acquired approximately 275,000 acres of new training land through a planning process that assesses requirements against available land contiguous to our installations.

An example of a successful land acquisition in support of training range needs is Fort Polk, Louisiana. The Army conducted extensive review and analysis of potential alternatives and concluded that a land acquisition would best meet the training requirements of Fort Polk's Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), one of the Army's Combat Training Centers which are our premiere unit training venues. Fort Polk

leadership's active involvement and strategic communication focus with land owners adjacent to Fort Polk were key to the successful acquisition of training lands. The result was a high level of public support and support from all levels of government for the acquisition of approximately 43,000 acres. This allowed the Army to build out the training space needed for JRTC to develop high-stress training scenarios, allowing the free-thinking opposing forces to exploit maneuver and create a realistic operating environment that delivers a crucible training experience for rotational Brigade Combat Teams.

Not all Army land acquisition efforts have been as successful as the one at Fort Polk. Generally, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) prescribes the key process the Army relies on to measure public support for all aspects of range modernization. The process not only satisfies legal requirements, but also helps us to maintain a trusted relationship with state and local communities and avoid potential encroachment issues. It was the NEPA process in 2013 that led the Army to identify significant public opposition to the acquisition of land adjacent to Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site, Colorado which led us to abandon the effort in order to maintain a positive relationship with local, state, and tribal communities near Fort Carson, Colorado.

Most Army installations were established decades ago at remote locations, intentionally selected to minimize impacts to the local community while also balancing national security considerations. Today, military installations share a special bond with their neighboring communities. Soldiers and their families live in cities like Hinesville, Georgia; Fayetteville, North Carolina; and Fairbanks, Alaska. They contribute to the local economy, attend the local schools, and are valuable members of the community. However, the growth of these communities has resulted in an increase of encroachment issues. Range encroachment challenges associated with light, noise, and environmental regulation emerge as these communities grow. The Army mitigates its encroachment challenges through the Army Compatibility Use Buffer program which identifies and provides a land buffer adjacent to Army lands, and with partner participation, the Army protects these areas from development, thus reducing encroachment and preserving the natural habitat. The Defense Department's

Readiness and Environment Protection Integration (REPI) Program also helps to maintain installation resilience and reduce encroachment pressures by avoiding land-use conflicts outside the fence line.

Every Army installation is required to prepare an Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) and Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP), in accordance with the Sikes Act and other laws associated with protecting cultural resources. INRMPs and ICRMPs are publicly available resources that demonstrate the Army's commitment to management strategies that sustain Army readiness while being stewards of natural and cultural heritage.

As we move toward the future, the Army is committed to developing new technologies and revising doctrine and training strategies to take advantage of technological advances. The Army has established cross functional teams to develop and field the latest technological innovations. Simply put, weapons shoot farther, are more accurate, and formations are capable of covering larger areas while conducting operations in very complicated, multi-domain environments. Some of these capabilities, like the Mobile Protected Firepower and the Next Generation Squad Weapon, provide Soldiers the ability to engage targets at a greater range with more precision. As these capabilities are delivered to the force, the Army training community will assess and adapt the range capabilities needed to employ new and modernized weapon systems within the confines of our installations. In addition, the Army will continue to conduct extensive review and analysis of potential alternatives to mitigate land acquisition requirements through use of constructive and virtual technologies. However, to be truly combat ready, the Army must continue to have the capability to employ these advanced systems in live training environments that allows the Army to train its combat formations to the fullest extent possible.