

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 28, 2025

The Honorable Dan P. Driscoll
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0101

Secretary Driscoll,

We write to establish next steps regarding the future of Pine Bluff Arsenal and to secure its crucial role in the defense industrial base. Please provide answers to the following inquiries no later than June 6, 2025.

As we discussed, we believe the Army's organic industrial base has an irreplaceable role to play in addressing this nation's munitions crisis. Our delegation has worked for years to persuade the Army to take steps to improve its arsenals, ammunition plants, and depots, including by re-orienting production at Pine Bluff Arsenal to address urgent military-munitions requirements.

To that end, we passed language in the FY2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Joint Explanatory Statement that directed the Secretary of the Army to provide a plan to "establish secondary domestic production sources at existing arsenals, depots, and ammunition plants of the U.S. Army to address munition supply chain chokepoints" no later than June 1, 2025. We expect the Army to produce this report in accordance with the law and provide a thorough, well-considered set of plans that explains how it should use Pine Bluff Arsenal and the other facilities within the Army's organic industrial base to meet urgent operational needs.

Furthermore, we are justifiably concerned that Army is attempting to circumvent the law by slowing operations at the arsenal before the FY26 NDAA and appropriations season, thus presenting Congress with a virtual fait accompli and limiting our ability to perform our constitutional oversight and budgetary responsibilities. Title 10 USC § 2687, base closures and realignments, specifies the Army may not close any military installation of more than 300 civilians or reduce its personnel by more than 50 percent without notifying Congress and presenting it with detailed strategic and economic evaluations of the impact of such a downsizing or closure. Title 10 USC § 4532, the Arsenal Act, requires the Secretary of the Army to procure supplies in government-owned factories or arsenals if possible "on an economical basis." We expect, and insist, that the Army will comply with current statute when producing a path forward at Pine Bluff Arsenal.

Please note that we're particularly interested to understand your cost assumptions regarding your compliance with the Arsenal Act. As we have explained on multiple occasions, we believe ample evidence indicates that Pine Bluff Arsenal is more economical than most commercial options. Thus, we want to assess what assumptions the Army is using to argue otherwise.

In addition to the required report, we now request the following additional information:

1. The Army's planned actions over the next 30 to 90 days at Pine Bluff Arsenal, to include proposed or enacted changes to staffing and production schedules. If no changes to Pine Bluff operations or personnel will occur, please definitively state that.
2. The courses of actions the Army is developing for Pine Bluff Arsenal's future, with at least the following information:
 - How each course of action complies with both 10 USC § 2687 and 10 USC § 4532, to include detailed cost data analysis.
 - At least one course of action explaining how the Army could use the arsenal to produce materials such as nitrocellulose, RDX, or TNT to address supply chain chokepoints.
 - Detailed estimates of the costs that will be incurred if Army moves the white phosphorus ammunition mission away from Pine Bluff Arsenal, including the cost and time associated with acquiring the necessary environmental permits.
3. Current capability gaps within the Army where manufacturing placement in the Army organic industrial base is possible, i.e. s-UAS, battery technology, brushless motors, etc.

We remain committed to ensuring, in line with President Trump's directive to the department, that the military has the munitions it needs to fight and win decisively. Fortunately, Pine Bluff Arsenal can help the Army solve the munitions crisis, hence we're not willing to allow its capabilities to wither on the vine.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



John Boozman
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress

cc:

The Honorable Pete Hegseth,
Secretary, Department of Defense

The Honorable Steve Feinberg,
Deputy Secretary, Department of Defense

General Dan Caine,
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

General Randy A. George,
Chief of Staff, United States Army