

*U.S. House of Representatives*  
Washington, DC 20515

Mr. Paul W. Farnan  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of The Army,  
(Installations, Energy And Environment)  
1600 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-1600

Lieutenant General Douglas M. Gabrum  
Commander, Installation Management Command  
2405 Gun Shed Road  
Joint Base San Antonio  
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234

April 15, 2022

Dear Mr. Farnan and General Gabram,

Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) is often described as a major city in the South Sound region of Washington state, with almost 7% of the region affiliated with the base. JBLM is the largest military installation on the West Coast, and is increasingly important as the Department continues to focus on Indo-Pacific operations. JBLM continues to get assigned missions, including the first home for the Multidomain Task Force (MDTF) and the prototype hypersonic ground equipment. With these new missions come new servicemembers, their families, and equipment. As JBLM continues to grow, so too does the surrounding region, creating several challenges for the base. This growth has resulted in increasing encroachment and one of the base's most pressing challenges—the desperate need for housing on the installation.

While JBLM has significant acreage, it also has a training mission and land set aside for endangered species conservation. JBLM must balance its vital training mission, existing housing shortage, and ongoing encroachment that prevents it from acquiring more land. I understand that JBLM is at 54% availability of training space needed, and that the Department must conduct a full assessment to ensure that all usable land has maximum utilization. To do that, JBLM must increase its housing density and use urban planning best practices.

There is a housing supply and affordability crisis throughout the country, and it affects service members and their families. Therefore, it is incumbent on the Department to help address this crisis by building more housing on JBLM. I also encourage the Department to find creative ways to address the housing shortage, including but not limited to identifying noncontiguous land for building housing and other amenities. To further these efforts, and to provide transparency to the families on JBLM, I request a response to the following queries:

1. I am aware that military installations are not bound to local zoning restrictions. However, given the limited amount of land available for developing new housing, how does the Department determine acceptable housing density?
2. How does the Department coordinate with privatized military housing providers to establish criteria for housing density?
3. How does the installation communicate the benefits of housing density to servicemembers and their families?
4. How do you ensure that unaccompanied housing has access to similar amenities and services, such as entertainment, transportation and food, as accompanied housing?
5. How does the Department determine where to build new facilities, housing, and commercial places?
6. How does the Department use the best practices from urban planning to help develop vibrant communities within military bases?
7. Has the Department consulted with experts in urban planning and land use on maximizing available space on military installations with limited opportunity for growth?

As new missions continue to be assigned to JBLM, now is the time to take the opportunity to do a complete reassessment of its urban core, its planning of neighborhoods, and overall land use. If the Department requires authorization or additional resources to conduct such a study, leadership must send a legislative proposal to the Committee on Armed Services. I thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter, and for your support of the servicemembers and families who call JBLM home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marilyn Strickland', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress