

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 11, 2018

The Honorable James N. Mattis
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Mattis,

We are writing regarding a report published in the Washington Post on May 10, 2018 (“Pentagon revised Obama-era report to remove risks from climate change”) alleging that the Department of Defense (DoD) amended its January 2018 Screening Level Vulnerability Assessment Survey (SLVAS) Report by omitting information from an internal draft dated December 2016.

According to excerpts of the internal draft published by the Washington Post, the final report omitted survey results that senior DoD officials asked military installations to report regarding their vulnerability to an increase in mean sea level. It also removed findings about how climate change is affecting the operating environment in the Arctic and the potential risks to DoD’s ability to conduct training and testing activities that are essential to military readiness. These are substantive, not stylistic, changes—and it is not the way we expect DoD to conduct business.

In general, the department conducts fair and transparent briefings, and its data collection and reliance on science is clear-eyed and robust. When it comes to installation and environment matters, DoD has shown leadership. For example, it draws on science to establish conservation easements around installations that protects them from commercial and residential encroachment—preserving the ability to conduct home station training without posing a risk to the public.

That is why we are deeply troubled by the Washington Post’s reporting. If DoD is not publishing data that it collects from our installations because they do not fit a particular political narrative, the department is failing to let the science inform its understanding of how changes in the environment may pose a risk to the ability to train our forces, the safety of our facilities and service members, and the long-term readiness of our military. In light of these allegations, we respectfully ask that you:

- Provide a complete copy of the draft December 2016 SLVAS referenced in the Washington Post; and
- Determine what changes were made from the draft to the final report published in January 2018, who specifically made those changes, and why.

The Honorable James N. Mattis
May 11, 2018
Page 2

We appreciate your prompt attention to this request for information and look forward to your response not later than Friday, May 18, 2018.

Sincerely,




BRIAN SCHATZ
U.S. Senator



JACK REED
U.S. Senator



RICHARD J. DURBIN
U.S. Senator



TINA SMITH
U.S. Senator



EDWARD J. MARKEY
U.S. Senator



KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND
U.S. Senator



TAMMY DUCKWORTH
U.S. Senator



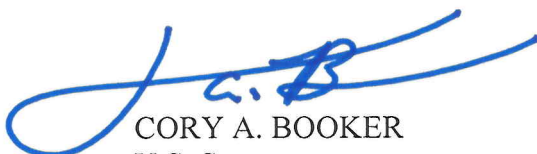
MARTIN HEINRICH
U.S. Senator



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
U.S. Senator



DIANNE FEINSTEIN
U.S. Senator



CORY A. BOOKER
U.S. Senator



BILL NELSON
U.S. Senator

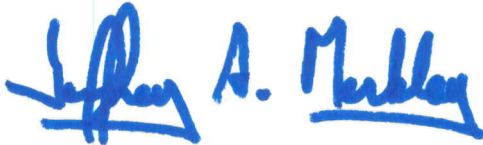
The Honorable James N. Mattis
May 11, 2018
Page 3



PATTY MURRAY
U.S. Senator



SHELDON WHITEHOUSE
U.S. Senator



JEFFREY A. MERKLEY
U.S. Senator



THOMAS R. CARPER
U.S. Senator



BERNARD SANDERS
U.S. Senator



MAZIE K. HIRONO
U.S. Senator



MICHAEL F. BENNET
U.S. Senator



GARY C. PETERS
U.S. Senator



JEANNE SHAHEEN
U.S. Senator