

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 21, 2020

The Honorable Alex Beehler
Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Installations, Environment & Energy)
110 Army Pentagon Room 3E464
Washington, D.C. 20310-0110

Dear Secretary Beehler,

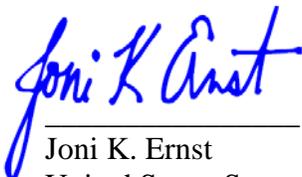
We write regarding our on-going efforts to ensure that there is better utilization of existing space at arsenals, specifically the Rock Island Arsenal. As you know, our congressional delegation has supported a variety of efforts to improve the process for taking inventory and leasing underutilized space and to require that the Department of Defense (DOD) look at such space before turning to the commercial market.

However, we recognize that more can be done to “market” existing space available to the Army, other federal agencies, and private partners where appropriate. For example, a Government Accountability Office Report (GAO 15-346) highlighted the challenges of information sharing between DOD and the General Services Administration (GSA) concerning opportunities to move non-DOD federal agencies onto available space on military installations.

To that end, we are aware that the Quad Cities Defense Alliance, a community organization that supports the Rock Island Arsenal, had a robust conversation with you and your staff over the past year regarding how existing space available at Army installations can be better identified as potentially available to host new missions or to facilitate consolidation. We are particularly interested in the potential for developing a prototype or pilot program of an online real-estate inventory tool that could help interested parties better understand what space is available for use at these locations. There is not currently an easily searchable tool that can be used for these purposes—there is no “Zillow.mil” or Multiple Listing Service (MLS) that the DOD can use to query its billion-plus square feet of inventory to see if a new mission or tenant can be hosted in existing space. Further, this tool could also be used by the Army to inform decision-making prior to the pursuit of costly commercial leases or new military construction projects.

The National Defense Strategy has a line of effort that calls for “reforming the Department’s business practices for greater performance and affordability.” We stand ready to support your efforts to do just that, especially at Rock Island Arsenal. Our goal would be to have a prototype or pilot program started by next fiscal year. We appreciate your interest in this matter and look forward to raising this issue further at upcoming hearings.

Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

Dick Durbin

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Chuck Grassley

Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Dave Loebsack

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress