Senate Hearing Highlights Sustainable Success by the Navy and Marine Corps

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Senator Jeanne Shaheen (NH) and Senator Mark Warner (VA) convened a field hearing on the USS Kearsarge on the role of the Navy and Marine Corps in reducing energy consumption, minimizing water use and expanding renewable energy generation. As a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Senator Shaheen has been heavily involved in advancing energy efficiency efforts including her work with Senator Rob Portman (OH) on S. 1000, the "Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act."

The hearing featured testimony from Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, former Senator John Warner of Virginia and other leaders from the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. While the hearing varied in topics from weapons systems to alternative fuels it did have a fair share of discussion about the role of buildings in driving down energy costs Navy wide.

In his testimony Secretary Mabus outlined the progress of the Navy in ensuring 50 percent of their department installations will be net-zero by 2020.

"In order to support a wide range of facility energy efficiency measures, we are aggressively conducting facility energy audits and completing installation of 'smart' electric metering," said Mabus. "By the end of this year, the more than 27,000 meters installed or under contract to be installed in our existing facilities will begin providing the capability to monitor and control the amount of energy we are consuming."

While existing buildings offer the largest opportunity to reduce utility bills, new construction was also discussed.

"By following LEED's integrated process for sustainable design we have recently brought online the most energy efficient building the Marine Corps has ever had," commented Major General James Kessler Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Installations Command [minute 121 of audiocast].

Unfortunately, Congress passed legislation last year that makes leadership in green building more challenging. We know that green building reduces energy and saves a lot of money, and now is the time to facilitate the leadership DOD is showing, not constrain it.

Listen to the full hearing or testimony.

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