

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Daniel P. Driscoll  
Secretary of the Army  
101 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Driscoll:

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding rumored guidance issued by Army Materiel Command (AMC) and Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM) to reduce the civilian workforce and impose a hiring freeze at Watervliet Arsenal, a measure that could result in the dismissal of up to 300 probationary and fixed-term employees, nearly 40% of the arsenal's current end strength. Such a drastic reduction would degrade the Army's mission readiness, decimate our organic industrial base, and ultimately compromise our capacity to respond to current and future global conflicts. Time and time again the Watervliet Arsenal and its workforce have proven indispensable in maintaining America's national security and I urge you in the strongest possible terms to immediately reverse consideration of any cuts to its workforce.

Built during the War of 1812, Watervliet Arsenal is the oldest continuously active arsenal in the United States and has been a centerpiece of our nation's organic industrial base for more than 200 years, serving as the Army's sole source for large-caliber cannon tube production and sustainment. Since its inception, Watervliet Arsenal has produced munitions, armaments, and components for countless mission-critical artillery weapon systems—including but not limited to barrels and cannon tubes for the M109 Paladin, the M777 howitzer, the M119 howitzer, the M1 Abrams, the M10 Booker, and several mortar systems.

Anyone who has visited Watervliet Arsenal knows that its true gem is its highly skilled 800-person civilian workforce, which possesses unique, irreplaceable expertise that makes the surge production of quality artillery possible. The reduction of such key components of Watervliet's workforce would have devastating impacts on the Army's ability to sustain and modernize its firepower and would effectively cripple the Army's organic industrial base. The arsenal's civilian workforce represents a reservoir of institutional knowledge and specialized skills that cannot be replaced or replicated elsewhere—a common theme across the TACOM enterprise. If the arsenal's workload and civilian personnel are not protected, that skillset will inevitably atrophy and regaining that critical technical expertise and level of proficiency will take decades—time that the Army simply cannot afford during large-scale combat or a future military contest against near-peer adversaries.

In every major US conflict over the last two centuries and periods in between, Watervliet Arsenal has been central to the Army's capacity to deliver long-range fires and other vital combat capabilities to the warfighter, boosting the Force's lethality and mission readiness in the field. With the rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape fueled by rising global tensions and emerging capabilities, the defense industrial base has grown in its strategic importance to our ability to respond to foreign threats and maintain a high readiness posture. As such, any decision to weaken a critical organic industrial base asset that provides direct support to our warfighters

would be a grave misstep. If the firing of roughly 40% of Watervliet's workforce proceeds as planned, it will cause massive production backlogs and delays in artillery weapons system deliveries and decimate organic industrial base capacity to surge production in times of crisis.

Therefore, as I did during our meeting at my Washington, DC office in February, I again urge you to oppose any proposed workforce reductions at Watervliet Arsenal and to prioritize the modernization of its facilities and production streams. In addition, as per your commitment during our conversation, I again urge you to visit Watervliet Arsenal to witness first-hand the ingenious, efficient, and effective manufacturing facilities and production lines that were designed and have been managed and operated entirely by the arsenal's civilian employees every day for the last 211 years. Once you do, I am certain you will realize their indispensable contributions to our national security.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles E. Schumer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charles" and last name "Schumer" clearly legible.

Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator