

MAZIE K. HIRONO
HAWAII

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1104

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY &
NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS &
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

February 17, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Lloyd Austin
Secretary of Defense
1010 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1010

Dear Secretary Austin,

As the Red Hill water contamination crisis continues, I remain committed to ensuring all responsible parties adhere to existing regulatory processes so that the immediate water contamination crisis can be resolved and Department of Defense can execute a thoughtful and effective long-term plan for strategic fuel storage for the Pacific.

The Hawaii Department of Health has the power and authority to determine the future of Red Hill, including shutting it down, through its permitting process. Your Department has acknowledged this authority in your appeal to the Governor's Emergency Order.

There are serious questions whether the Navy will be able to clearly demonstrate their ability to safely operate Red Hill and in so doing keep the community safe. It appears likely the Hawaii Department of Health will not issue a permit for the Navy to operate Red Hill, shutting it down. I will support that decision.

While the State of Hawaii proceeds with the permitting process, I will hold the Navy accountable to finalizing the defueling plan. The Department of Defense must identify a long-term solution to support the strategic war reserve and the operational fuel needs of INDOPACOM.

Deputy Secretary Hicks has directed the Director of Cost Assessment & Program Evaluation (CAPE) to stand up a Tiger Team to identify options for the long-term fuel reserve needs of the Indo Pacific region, including shutting down Red Hill. Given the likelihood of an eventual Red Hill shutdown, I urge this team to focus its attention on options that do not depend on Red Hill being operational. CAPE's analysis is projected to be completed by the end of February 2022. As you will ultimately make the decision based on the analysis, I request that you brief me on the options developed by CAPE related to Red Hill immediately following the completion of their analysis and your decision.

Resolving the Red Hill crisis will take significant funding and direction from Congress. Therefore, it is imperative that we receive this completed analysis and your briefing by March 30, 2022 in order to ensure the upcoming fiscal year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act includes necessary provisions to protect Hawaii's water and our national security.

Sincerely,



Mazie K. Hirono
U.S. Senator