



State of New Jersey

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Governor

July 21, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

The Honorable Daniel P. Driscoll
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth and Secretary Driscoll,

I write to express my grave concern over the United States Army's proposed Army Transformation Initiative, particularly the restructuring of its acquisition enterprise through the consolidation of the Army's twelve current Program Executive Offices (PEOs) into seven Capability Executive Offices (CEOs). While I recognize the need for agility and efficiency in modernization efforts, disrupting the structure that has supported decades of complex acquisition could jeopardize the delivery of critical capabilities to the warfighter, especially in areas requiring deep institutional knowledge and significant technical complexity. Specifically, such a sweeping reorganization threatens to destabilize the Army's ammunition enterprise, an area central to readiness, by reassigning core mission responsibilities currently housed at New Jersey's Picatinny Arsenal. As the Army's primary armament facility, Picatinny possesses decades of unmatched technical expertise, state-of-the-art infrastructure, and a highly skilled, mission-driven workforce with vast experience in the development and management of advanced weapons and munitions. Removing this critical mission from Picatinny would not only dismantle a uniquely capable and proven center of excellence—it would result in poorer weapons being delivered to our soldiers, compromising their safety and weakening our battlefield effectiveness for generations to come.

As you are aware, for over 140 years, Picatinny Arsenal has stood as the Army's central hub for armaments innovation and lifecycle management. It supports every stage of the armaments pipeline, from cutting-edge research and development (R&D) to testing, procurement, and sustainment. Its workforce includes thousands of highly specialized engineers, scientists, and acquisition professionals whose expertise is critical to delivering advanced, combat-ready capabilities. As the home of critical organizations such as the Joint Program Executive Office for Armaments and Ammunition (JPEO A&A), Picatinny plays a vital role in the delivery of safe, effective, and modern munitions not only to the Army, but across all branches of the military. Over the last decade alone, Picatinny Arsenal has delivered more than 20 new or upgraded weapons systems, ensuring that the Army maintains its battlefield advantage. This record of innovation, precision, and rapid delivery is not theoretical, it has made a decisive difference in conflicts around the globe. Diminishing this capability would create gaps the Army cannot easily replace, weakening the force's ability to respond to global threats with speed, reliability, and mission assurance.

Despite Picatinny's exceptional record of performance, the Army's proposal would significantly reduce the Arsenal's role by converting the JPEO A&A into the CEO for Ammunition. Today, the JPEO A&A operates entirely out of Picatinny, where a vertically integrated team oversees the full lifecycle of conventional munitions—from R&D to acquisition, production, and sustainment. Centralizing these functions under one roof has enabled effective coordination, technical continuity, efficient budgeting, and responsive support to the warfighter. Breaking up this structure would introduce significant risk not only to one of the Army's most critical supply chains, but to DOD's entire conventional munitions enterprise. The proposed realignment would fragment this model by stripping key responsibilities from JPEO A&A and distributing them across multiple CEOs. Such a shift would disrupt program integration, slow development timelines, and weaken the Army's ability to deliver effective and affordable munitions to the field.

Under the current proposal, approximately \$500 million in annual R&D funding for ammunition would be redirected from Picatinny to other CEOs across the country. In addition, the acquisition of key armament systems, including mortars, artillery, and precision fires, would be reassigned to separate CEOs, removing nearly \$1 billion in program funding from Picatinny Arsenal and eliminating as many as 1,000 highly skilled positions. This would not only hollow out one of the Army's most capable acquisition centers but would fracture the lifecycle model that has allowed Picatinny to rapidly and effectively deliver the systems our troops rely on.

In addition to the strategic and operational risks, the Army's proposal would reintroduce fragmentation into an acquisition model that was intentionally consolidated decades ago in order to improve coordination, oversight, and efficiency. Vertical integration of R&D and procurement is a proven industrial model to increase speed, efficiency, and reduce cost. By once again dividing the ammunition enterprise among several CEOs, the Army risks reversing two decades of progress and recreating the very dysfunction the current model was designed to eliminate. This fragmentation would not only complicate program execution but also widens the "valley of death"—the critical gap between early research and full-rate production, where promising technologies are most at risk of stalling or being abandoned due to a lack of coordination between key systems. Today, JPEO A&A mitigates this challenge because it manages the full cradle-to-grave process, bringing research, procurement, and sustainment under one roof and under one chain of command. Engineers developing new systems collaborate directly with those responsible for budgeting, procurement, and sustainment, all under the unified leadership at Picatinny. Splitting these roles across disparate commands would reduce visibility, stall decision-making, and ultimately result in fewer systems crossing the finish line. At a time when the Army faces serious stockpile constraints, we cannot afford to layer inefficiency on top of urgency.

Most importantly, and perhaps the most concerning is that the Army's proposal would directly threaten the stability of one of DoD's most specialized and irreplaceable workforces. Picatinny Arsenal is home to more than 6,000 military, civilian, and contractor personnel, including the scientists, engineers, and acquisition experts who lead the R&D and lifecycle management of advanced conventional weapons and ammunition. This highly skilled workforce has been built over generations and represents a unique concentration of talent that does not exist elsewhere in the Army or across the DoD. It includes graduates and faculty from the Army's Armaments Graduate School, located at Picatinny, which provides advanced technical education in fields critical to weapons development. Relocating these mission sets to other installations that lack this foundation would fracture the Army's development pipeline and severely degrade its capacity to train and retain future weapons specialists.

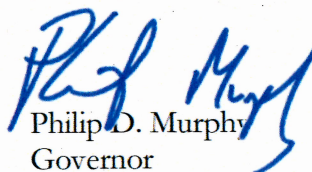
As mentioned above, the proposed restructuring is projected to eliminate up to 1,000 positions at Picatinny, many of them held by long-tenured civilian employees with decades of experience. While some may be offered opportunities to transfer, many are unlikely to relocate, resulting in a massive loss of institutional knowledge that cannot simply be rebuilt elsewhere. There is no readily available pool of similarly trained personnel at any other DoD installation. Dismantling this workforce would not only delay future systems development, but almost certainly result in lower-quality weapons reaching our soldiers, undermining the Army's stated goals for modernization. This loss would also have a significant impact on the surrounding region, which depends on Picatinny as a major employer and economic anchor.

I join my colleagues in the New Jersey Congressional Delegation in respectfully requesting a thorough briefing on the Army's proposed acquisition reform, no later than August 1, 2025. This briefing should include additional details on the proposal, its current status, and answers to the following questions:

1. What analysis was conducted to determine that breaking apart the responsibilities of the JPEO A&A would improve efficiency?
2. What specific goals is the Army seeking to achieve through this proposal, and how was it determined that dismantling JPEO A&A would support those outcomes?
3. What is the projected cost of implementing this proposal?
4. How many civilian positions and contracts would be eliminated if the proposal were enacted?
5. In what ways did the Army consult with local communities and Congress during the development of this proposal?

The future of Picatinny Arsenal is not just a New Jersey issue, it is a matter of national defense. At a time when the DOD is focused on expanding production capacity and strengthening its industrial base, Picatinny should be at the center of those efforts, not sidelined by structural changes that would diminish its mission. I strongly urge you not to proceed with this proposal until my office and the New Jersey Congressional Delegation have been fully briefed and consulted. We stand ready to work with Army and DoD leadership to ensure that Picatinny remains a center of armament excellence for generations to come.

Sincerely,


Philip D. Murphy
Governor