



Dear Representative,

On behalf of our organizations and our combined memberships, we urge you to make in order the bipartisan amendment #91 offered by Reps. Ken Buck (R-CO), Jared Huffman (D-CA), and Ralph Norman (R-SC) to amend Section 8127 of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Department of Defense Appropriations bill and strike elements of that provision that would effectively force the Pentagon to ship coal across the Atlantic Ocean to fuel a particular military facility in Germany. The Pentagon should be allowed to determine how to meet their energy needs in the most cost-effective and secure manner and not micro-managed at one facility.

Successful floor amendments in both 2015 and 2016 ended a wasteful decades-long program to ship a particular type of coal from northeastern Pennsylvania to heat several U.S. military bases in Germany. This program began, on a much larger scale, in 1961. But although its scope has narrowed over the years, the requirement still existed in the FY2016 Pentagon spending bill considered by the House 54 years later.

The amendments won handily. In 2016 the vote was 252 in favor and 159 opposed. In 2017 the vote was 268 in favor and 153 opposed.

Unfortunately, after a few years of dormancy, the FY19 Chairman's mark resurrects this requirement in a modified form. While previous language prohibited the modernization of the heating plants at U.S. military installations in the Kaiserslautern Military Community in Germany to be fired by any fuel other than coal, the new language appears to allow some greater flexibility but goes on to state: "(2) the design of such Medical Center will utilize a diversified energy supply from a mixed-fuel system as the source of furnished energy to sustain mission critical operations during any sustained energy supply disruption caused by the Russian Federation; and (3) to the extent available, domestically-sourced fuels shall be the preferred source for furnished energy for such Medical Center."

As you know, the use of the words “will” and “shall” tie the hands of the Pentagon. “Mixed-fuel system” is another way of requiring coal to remain as one heating source. In addition, the “preferred” energy source is still the U.S. and would have to be shipped across the Atlantic Ocean. You may hear the argument that the fuel must come from the U.S. or the Pentagon will be forced to buy it from Russia. Don’t be fooled. This proposed amendment leaves intact the provision directing the Pentagon to, “minimize the use of fuels sourced from inside the Russian Federation”.

Our position is the Pentagon should be allowed to fuel this particular military facility as it does every other, without Congress continuing this backdoor earmark that has been in place, in one form or another, since 1961.

We urge you to make the Buck/Huffman/Norman amendment in order under the rule. To do so is to allow Members to vote for fiscally conservative values and against the continuation of another outdated government subsidy.

Sincerely,

Americans for Tax Reform
Campaign for Liberty
Coalition to Reduce Spending
Council for Citizens Against Government Waste
National Taxpayers Union
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Taxpayers Protection Alliance