

Everyone says climate laws can never pass Congress. But there's a major exception. Each year since Trump took office, Congress has passed climate legislation as part of Defense Department spending. Trump has signed all of those laws. In 2017, there was a [congressional finding](#) that climate change is a threat to national security. In 2018, it was a [mandate](#) for climate and energy resilience. This year's [bill](#) was no exception.

Making military bases climate resilient has been a persistent goal in these bills. The bill passed in 2019 is no exception. It earmarks spending for this purpose, requires all the military services to use the Navy's Climate Change Installation Adaptation and Resilience planning handbook. It also calls on DOD to create a Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment Tool. Lest the Pentagon make use of dodgy science, it has to get a federally funded research center to give it "a certification in writing that the tool relies on the best publicly available science for the prediction of extreme weather risk and effective mitigation of that risk." Section 2804 requires the amendment of facilities standards to ensure climate and energy resilience. Succeeding sections require consideration of future changes in weather and sea levels. No climate denial here.

Perhaps the most intriguing provision is section 5321. It requires the Director of National Intelligence to create a Climate Security Advisory Council. The Council's mandate is to facilitate information exchange in the intelligence community and to "ensure that the intelligence community is adequately prioritizing climate change in carrying out its activities." The term "climate security" includes impacts of climate change on the U.S. and its allies, along with effects on "ongoing or potential political violence, including unrest, rioting, guerrilla warfare, insurgency, terrorism, rebellion, revolution, civil war, and interstate war." The intelligence community has long viewed climate change as a national security threat, and this provision seems designed to institutionalize that stance.

One lesson here, I suppose, is that we should try to pack as much climate related stuff into must-pass legislation like Defense appropriations. Another is that, even in difficult political times, we must keep seeking opportunities for maintaining climate action. And we must be willing to find new allies, including military leaders who see no choice except realism about the threat of climate change.