

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Christine Wormuth
Secretary
United States Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Secretary Wormuth:

We are investigating ammunition production at the government-owned, contractor-operated Lake City Army Ammunition Plant (Lake City plant) in Independence, Missouri, following a media report that ammunition fired in at least 12 mass shootings involved ammunition that had been manufactured at the Lake City plant.¹ Information provided to the Committee by senior Army officials reveals that the Army is subsidizing production of commercial ammunition produced on government property with limited oversight mechanisms, such as tracking the use of ammunition manufactured at the Lake City plant in mass shootings and sales to foreign commercial customers.²

In September 2019, the Army selected and contracted with Olin Winchester on a multi-year contract in which the company assumed full operational control and management of the Lake City plant, which produces small caliber ammunition rounds and cartridges for the U.S. Army.³ The Lake City plant is the only active government-owned, contractor-operated facility that permits the commercial production of firearm ammunition in a military facility. Olin Winchester acknowledged that the contract with the Army would “provide a consistent revenue stream” and that one benefit of the contract is that “military and law enforcement business segments tend to be more stable and predictable than the more variable commercial segment.”⁴

Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings from Olin Winchester’s parent company, Olin Corporation, state that Olin Winchester manufactures “small caliber military

¹ *Army Ammunition Plant Is Tied to Mass Shootings Across the U.S.*, New York Times (Nov. 11, 2023) (online at www.nytimes.com/2023/11/11/us/army-ammunition-factory-shootings.html).

² See Briefing by The Honorable Douglas R. Bush, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, U.S. Army, to Staff, Committee on Oversight and Accountability (Dec. 19, 2023).

³ Winchester, *Corporate Social Responsibility Report* (2022) (online at https://olin.com/wp-content/uploads/600-05033-1122_Winchester_2022_CSR_Report.pdf).

⁴ *Id.*; Department of Defense, *Contracts for Sept. 27, 2019* (online at www.defense.gov/News/Contracts/Contract/Article/1973911/) (accessed Jan. 5, 2024).

ammunition,” as well as “Winchester sporting ammunition” at the Lake City plant.⁵ Sporting ammunition is sold to both domestic and international commercial customers, including recreational shooters, hunters, and law enforcement.⁶ Since securing the multi-year competitive contract for the Lake City plant in 2019, Olin Winchester more than doubled its commercial sales—increasing by \$438 million through sales of ammunition produced across its three sites.⁷ In 2022, Olin Winchester received 8% of its sales, or \$133.7 million, from international commercial customers.⁸ The potential for a lucrative government contract for military ammunition to support, subsidize, or boost Olin Winchester’s commercial sales is extremely concerning.

On December 19, 2023, senior Army officials confirmed in a bipartisan staff briefing that as the operator of the Lake City plant, Olin Winchester is required to maintain the capacity to meet minimum annual ammunition production of 1.6 billion rounds for surge capacity. Despite this minimum capacity requirement, Army officials stated that between 2019 and 2021 the Army purchased on average 535 million rounds per year, and that the Army has never purchased more than 1.5 billion rounds in a single year. Army officials also acknowledged that Olin Winchester is able to use the government-owned facility for commercial production and that the Army does not have any restrictions in place regarding commercial production at the Lake City plant.⁹

Committee Democrats are particularly concerned that the Army is subsidizing commercially-produced AR-15 style ammunition at a government-owned facility with limited transparency, reporting, or accountability requirements. For example, at the briefing, senior Army officials also acknowledged that the Army does not track customer nor end-user information of commercially sold ammunition produced by Olin Winchester at the Lake City plant for either foreign or domestic customers.¹⁰ As a result, in the absence of any requirement in the current contract to track and report end-user information, the end-user could be a future mass shooter or perpetrator of gun violence. Army officials also confirmed that the Army

⁵ Securities and Exchange Commission, *Form 10-K (Olin Corporation) (2020–2022)* (online at <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sec.irpass.cc/1548/0000074303-21-000019.pdf>; <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sec.irpass.cc/1548/0000074303-22-000015.pdf>; <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sec.irpass.cc/1548/0000074303-23-000054.pdf>) (accessed Jan. 5, 2024).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*; Briefing by The Honorable Douglas R. Bush, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, U.S. Army, to Staff, Committee on Oversight and Accountability (Dec. 19, 2023). Winchester's three plants are located in Independence, Missouri (government-owned, contractor operated plant); East Alton, Illinois; and Oxford, Mississippi.

⁸ Securities and Exchange Commission, *Form 10-K (Olin Corporation) (2020–2022)* (online at <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sec.irpass.cc/1548/0000074303-21-000019.pdf>; <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sec.irpass.cc/1548/0000074303-22-000015.pdf>; <https://s3.amazonaws.com/sec.irpass.cc/1548/0000074303-23-000054.pdf>) (accessed Jan. 5, 2024).

⁹ Briefing by The Honorable Douglas R. Bush, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, U.S. Army, to Staff, Committee on Oversight and Accountability (Dec. 19, 2023). *See also* National Defense Authorization, Fiscal Year 2001, Pub. L. No. 106-398, Sec. 343 (2000) (online at www.congress.gov/106/plaws/publ398/PLAW-106publ398.pdf).

¹⁰ Briefing by The Honorable Douglas R. Bush, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, U.S. Army, to Staff, Committee on Oversight and Accountability (Dec. 19, 2023).

receives a roughly “10–15% discount” on the ammunition it purchases from Olin Winchester, resulting in a cost savings of “\$25–35 million a year.”¹¹

Policy experts and public officials acknowledge that oversight of the ammunition industry is needed to address the gun violence crisis in our country, and that must involve *all* participants in this industry.¹² As a result of the pervasive devastation of the gun violence epidemic on American communities, and with more than 46,000 firearm deaths and 656 mass shootings in 2023, the role of the Army in supporting the commercial ammunition industry must be evaluated.¹³

Please provide the following documents and information no later than February 22, 2024:

1. Documents, information, or analyses that support the contract requirements between the Army and Olin Winchester for the annual production capacity of 1.6 billion rounds of ammunition;
2. Army’s contract with Olin Winchester for full management and operational control of the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant, initiated on September 27, 2019, including any modifications or changes from September 27, 2019, to the present;
3. Documents and information related to the ten-year fixed-price matrix and additional cost-plus arrangements between the Army and Olin Winchester for the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant;
4. Total annual production volume at the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant from September 1, 2019, to the present, disaggregated by type of munition and by product line, e.g., military, law enforcement, and commercial production;
5. All reports Olin Winchester provided to the Army related to commercial or law enforcement production and sales activity at the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant from September 1, 2019, to the present.

¹¹ *Id.*

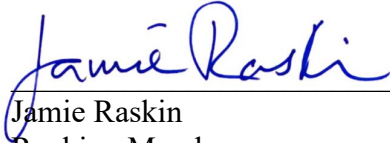
¹² See Giffords, Ammunition Regulation (online at <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/hardware-ammunition/ammunition-regulation/>) (accessed Jan. 29, 2024); The Trace, *Why Is It Easier to Buy Bullets Than Cold Medicine?* (Jan. 9, 2023) (online at www.thetrace.org/2023/01/bullet-ammunition-regulation-guns/); *Bullet Sales Are Rising and So Are Death Totals in Mass Shootings. Can They Be Stopped?* (Dec. 29, 2022) (online at www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2022/12/28/states-try-curb-mass-shootings-bullets-ammo-laws/10760437002/); Letter from Attorney General Letitia James, et al., to Stefanie Feldman, White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention (Jan. 9, 2024) (online at <https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/letters/lake-city-multistate-letter.pdf>).

¹³ Gun Violence Archives, *GVA—10 Year Review* (online at www.gunviolencearchive.org) (accessed Jan. 5, 2024).

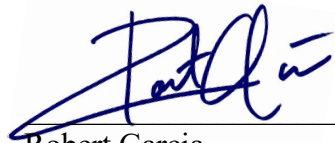
The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member



Robert Garcia
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security, the
Border, and Foreign Affairs

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

The Honorable Glenn Grothman, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security, the Border, and Foreign Affairs