

May 15, 2009

Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tim Johnson
Chairman
Military Construction, VA and Related
Agencies Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
SD-122 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
Ranking Member
Military Construction, VA and Related
Agencies Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
SH-125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Colleagues:

As the Military Construction, VA and Related Agencies Subcommittee formulates its appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2010, I respectfully request that the following items be considered for inclusion.

1. Military Construction Items in the President's Budget

1. Army –Fort Richardson, Alaska
 - i. Airborne Sustainment Training Complex \$6,100,000
 - ii. Training Aids Center \$2,050,000
 - iii. Warrior in Transition Complex \$43,000,000
2. Army – Fort Wainwright, Alaska
 - i. Aviation Task Force Complex, Phase 1, \$125,000,000
 - ii. Aviation Unit Operations Complex, \$19,000,000
 - iii. Railhead Complex \$26,000,000
 - iv. Warrior in Transition Complex \$28,000,000

3. Air Force – Clear Air Force Station, Alaska
 - i. Power Plant Facility \$24,300,000
 4. Air Force – Elmendorf Air Force Base Alaska
 - i. F-22 Weapons Load Training Facility \$12,600,000
 - ii. Red Flag Alaska Add/Alter Operations Center \$3,100,000
 5. Tricare Management Activity – Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska
 - i. Aeromedical Services and Mental Health Clinic \$25,017,000
 6. Tricare Management Activity – Fort Richardson, Alaska
 - i. Health Clinic \$3,518,000
2. Congressionally Directed Spending Items
1. Eielson Air Force Base – Repair Arctic Utilidors – Request is for \$9.9 million from Air Force Military Construction to repair and repair approximately 2,526 LF of utilidors on Eielson Air Force Base. It is the last of eleven phases. These utilidors and associated piping have exceeded their useful life. Replacement of the utilidors is necessary to avoid costly utility outages. The project number is FTQW093002.
 2. Eielson Air Force Base – Install Edge Lights, Taxiway Golf - Request is for \$3 million from Air Force Military Construction to replace 12,000 LF of taxiway edge lighting and 12,000 SF of shoulder at Eielson Air Force Base. Taxiway Golf is currently closed after dark and during periods of low visibility, decreasing Eielson's ability to support NORAD tanker force missions and Red Flag-Alaska exercises. Improving the taxiway will decrease the change of aircraft ground incidents; allow increase operations tempo and shorter taxi times. The project number is FTQW071101.
 3. Fort Richardson – Physical Fitness Center – Request is for \$23.5 million from Army Military Construction to construct a 36,000 square foot expansion to physical fitness center, including exercise area, jogging track, indoor swimming pool, and four playing fields. The project will be constructed design/build. Fort Richardson is currently authorized three swimming pools. The existing 25 meter pool is heavily utilized and needs significant renovation. Fort Richardson is short one 50 meter swimming pool and one additional 25 meter swimming pool. Also all the physical fitness facilities as they exist now are used at capacity. These shortages are particularly detrimental to the troop physical training and morale during the long winter months. The current influx of additional Soldiers and supported population is anticipated to grow over the near and long term and these additions are needed to aid

with the existing shortfalls and projected needs for the future. Due to the weather conditions this type of facility is vital to the training and total well being of the entire supported population year round. The project number is 61515.

4. Elmendorf Air Force Base – Repair Arctic Utilities and Infrastructure – Request is for \$12.2 million from Air Force Military Construction to fund the first phase of a 10 phase project totaling \$100 million which will replace a deteriorated 60 year old water, sewer and electrical system which requires constant maintenance to keep operational. The deteriorated system places the base mission and population at risk. The project number is 811-145.
5. Eielson Air Force Base – Replace Youth Center - Request is for \$12.2 million from Air Force Military Construction to replace Eielson Air Force Base's current youth center, which was built as a mess hall in 1955 with a 16,760 foot youth center. The current facility is regarded as dysfunctional with an unsafe layout. More than 30 children remain on waiting lists for after school programs. Eielson's remote arctic location offers few alternatives for children and the lack of availability of a functional Youth Center requires airmen to transport their children 26 miles off-base for activities and daycare. The project number is FTQW053009.
6. Fort Greely – Fire Station – Request is for \$23 million in Army Military Construction to replace Fort Greely's fire station which long predated Fort Greely's Ground –based Missile Defense (GMD) mission. Fort Greely has a three engine fire company. Its antiquated fire station can only accommodate a one engine fire company and has no space for personnel. Equipment is housed in a hanger and shared storage shed. Firefighters are not mated with their equipment delaying response times and placing life safety in jeopardy. The project number is 55873.

3. Department of Veterans Affairs Request

The President's budget proposes to continue the following language into the FY 2010 VA Appropriations Bill.

SEC. 216. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall allow veterans who are eligible under existing Department of Veterans Affairs medical care requirements and who reside in Alaska to obtain medical care services from medical facilities supported by the Indian Health Service or tribal organizations. The Secretary shall: (1) limit the application of this provision to rural Alaskan veterans in areas where an existing Department of Veterans Affairs facility or Veterans Affairs-contracted service is unavailable; (2) require participating veterans and facilities to comply with all appropriate rules and regulations, as established by the Secretary; (3) require this provision

to be consistent with Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services activities; and (4) result in no additional cost to the Department of Veterans Affairs or the Indian Health Service.

While this language is well intentioned I discovered through the testimony delivered at a November 2007 field hearing in Anchorage, Alaska conducted under the auspices of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs that veterans who reside in rural Alaska, including recently returned veterans of Iraq conflict, who reside in rural Alaska must travel to Anchorage often at their own expense to receive care from the VA. The VA has not entered into adequate arrangements with the tribal health facilities which deliver care in rural Alaska under self governance compacts with the Indian Health Service to provide this care. I hope to work with the subcommittee to improve this language so that veterans living in rural Alaska can obtain the health care they earned through Indian Health Service funded tribal facilities in or near their communities. I also hope to work with the committee in finding solutions to other barriers which deter Alaska's veterans from obtaining their earned VA health benefits conveniently.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has a pecuniary interest in any of the congressionally directed spending items that I have requested consistent with the requirements of paragraph 9 of Rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate. I further certify that I have posted a description of the items requested on my official website, along with the accompanying justification.

The staff contact for these requests is Nathan Bergerbest at (202) 224-2839. Mr. Bergerbest's e-mail address is nathan_bergerbest@murkowski.senate.gov.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator