

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2004

May 26, 2011

The Honorable Tim Johnson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
122 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mark Kirk
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Kirk:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies with recommendations to prioritize programmatic spending for fiscal year 2012. In general, I would like to express my support for the President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2012, especially the MILCON projects in the State of Maryland. I have seen first-hand the importance of these installations and strongly support the next phase of Military Construction slated for FY2012.

While we work to balance the federal budget, we must continue to recognize, support and fund the federal programs that are critical to our national defense. A historically neglected program in need of restructuring is the Defense Access Road program. As the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) program seeks to gain efficiencies within the Department of Defense, the impact on local communities is often substantial. As was shown in Maryland during BRAC 2005, there is often a need for federal assistance in dealing with BRAC decisions without a good mechanism for providing that assistance. The Defense Access Road (DAR) program is outdated and is not representative of the changing transportation impact and needs of BRAC impacted communities.

Three recent and relevant reports have been produced for Congress. Each provides valuable background on the scope of the BRAC related traffic problems that will hit numerous communities very hard in the fall of 2011.

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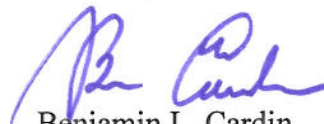
These reports are: National Academies of Science Transportation Research Board's report "Federal Funding of Transportation Improvements in BRAC Cases," February 2011; GAO's "Military Base Realignments and Closures - Transportation Impact of Personnel Increases Will Be Significant, but Long-Term Costs Are Uncertain and Direct Federal Support Is Limited," September 2009 (GAO-09-750); and GAO's "Defense Infrastructure – High Level Federal Interagency Coordination is Warranted to Address Transportation Needs beyond the Scope of the Defense Access Roads Program," January 2011 (GAO-11-165).

GAO's best overall estimate was that there is a \$2 billion unfunded requirement for transportation needs as a result of the BRAC 2005. The GAO study also determined that while many federal highway and transit programs can be used for many BRAC-related transportation needs, dedicated funds are not available. Instead, BRAC-related transportation projects must compete with other proposed transportation projects, many of which predate the BRAC needs.

I would propose that a competitive grant program be included in both the NDAA and Defense Appropriation for FY12. Attached is draft language that I offer for consideration to meet this need. I did not place a dollar value on the amount proposed for the program, as I felt the committee would have the best idea of how much to fund the grant program based on known needs.

If your staffs have any questions, please have them contact Shane Knisley of my office at (202) 228-6448.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

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