

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 13, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
U.S. Senate Majority Leader
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate Minority Leader
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Senator Inouye, and Senator Cochran:

As Congress works with the new Administration to develop a concrete plan to stimulate the United States economy, we hope you will carefully consider the idea of allocating funding specifically for National Guard military construction projects. Many National Guard, as well as U.S. Reserves, military construction projects across the country are shovel-ready. They can move forward immediately and provide jobs and revenue to our communities, strengthening our nation.

Army and Air National Guard facilities are not concentrated on large military installations, but, instead, widely dispersed across the nation. The National Guard is a community-based force with more than 3,200 Army and Air Guard facilities spread across hometowns in 54 states, territories and the District of Columbia.

These facilities are crucial to the readiness of the National Guard. Citizen soldiers and airmen gather at these facilities to store equipment and to conduct the training, administration, recruiting and maintenance necessary for the units to be fully prepared for the call to duty – whether that call comes from the Army or Air Force for combat service overseas or from a State governor for response to disasters other emergencies here at home.

National Guard facilities are more than just critical centers for military readiness. In hometowns across America, the local National Guard armory may be the only military installation for miles around. As a result, National Guard facilities are an important, tangible brick-and-mortar touch point between the American people and the American military. Many National Guard facilities also serve as de facto community centers which host events and gatherings important to the fabric of society in hometown America.

Under current law, State governments are required to provide a percentage of the cost of National Guard Military Construction projects. The language of 10 USC 18236(b)(2) states that federal funding may not exceed 75 percent of the total cost of construction. As economic conditions pressure state budgets, this requirement could be a limiting factor, and, under any stimulus plan, this requirement should be waived.

As a result from a congressional request, the National Guard Bureau has identified more than 100 quickly executable projects nationwide totaling nearly \$1.2 Billion. Over \$832 million falls under Army National Guard military construction, while \$352.5 million with Air National Guard military construction. These are projects which meet validated military requirements and according to the Guard Bureau, all issues of land acquisition and environmental matters are resolved and the project design is complete. For facilities sustainment, restoration and maintenance, we understand that the Army National Guard could immediately execute \$368 million and the Air National Guard could immediately execute about \$30.4 million in Operations and Maintenance funds.

We hope you will give careful consideration to this economic stimulus proposal, which will create new jobs and help revitalize communities and the broader economy. We look forward to discussing this idea with you in the near future.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY
Co-Chair
U.S. Senate National Guard Caucus



CHRISTOPHER S. BOND
Co-Chair
U.S. Senate National Guard Caucus

cc: Rahm Emanuel, White House Chief of Staff-designate
Peter Orszag, Director-designate, Office of Management and Budget
Christina Romer, Chair-designate, Council of Economic Advisors