

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 29, 2015

The Honorable Mark S. Kirk
Chair, Military Construction and Veterans
Affairs Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester
Ranking Member, Military Construction
and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kirk and Ranking Member Tester:

As you prepare to mark-up the FY16 Military Construction/Veterans Affairs Appropriations Bill, we are writing to ask that you support the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) budget request for FY 2016 Major Construction. As outlined in the Independent Budget produced by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, AMVETS, and Disabled American Veterans, the Strategic Capital Investment Plan (SCIP) has been chronically underfunded. The FY 2016 budget request is a start to correcting this recurring shortfall that has left the VA with inadequate and difficult to maintain facilities. In particular this appropriation would fund many critical projects including the construction of a new community based outpatient clinic (CBOC) located in French Camp, California.

As background, Congress approved the Central Valley CBOC and community living center in 2004 as part of the VA's Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) initiative. In 2010, Congress appropriated \$55 million for land acquisition and to fund construction planning. This project is now 'construction ready' in every sense – and our Central Valley veterans are eager to see progress on a project promised to them in 2004. The French Camp CBOC will serve an estimated 87,000 veterans covering a large geographic area that includes San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Calaveras, Tuolumne and Amador Counties, as well as others.

Central Valley veterans have waited patiently for construction of this new French Camp medical facility for years. Meanwhile, over this extended period of time and owing to delays within the VA's construction management process, these veterans have had to endure the hardship of traveling in excess of six hours roundtrip to access primary and specialty care at the VA Palo Alto Medical Center. Routine appointments can often take an entire day. Requiring disabled and elderly veterans to travel this distance in heavily congested traffic conditions is a disservice. 'Construction ready' and clearly needed to fill demonstrated gaps in access to care, now is the time to appropriate full funding for the Livermore Realignment/French Camp project.

Our veterans are real heroes, and we know that you are committed to maintain the highest level of care. By appropriating the funds requested in the President's FY16 budget, you will ensure that our veterans have ready access to state-of-the-art medical care and services.

We want to work with you and all of our colleagues to see that Thank you for your help and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Jeff Denham
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress