

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 10, 2019

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Esper,

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), and Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), collectively known as the Tri-Caucus, write in reaction to your concession to reallocate \$1.8 billion from over 30 different military construction projects across the United States—in addition to the \$1.8 billion from military construction projects internationally—to pay for 175 miles of border wall along the United States-Mexico border. Congress authorized and appropriated funding for these projects, at the request of the Department of Defense (DoD), to replace aging military infrastructure, support child care for military families, and improve military readiness.


As you may know, these cuts were disproportionately felt on military bases located in CHC, CBC, and CAPAC districts. Approximately half of the domestic bases affected were in such districts. Further, the hardest-hit districts by this reallocation are Puerto Rico and Guam, both minority-majority jurisdictions. Due in part to these facts, and the concern that Tri-Caucus Member districts were targeted by the Administration, we request that the Department of Defense share its detailed process and methodology surrounding how affected bases and specific military construction projects were selected, how unaffected bases and projects were exempted, and the Department's justification for the selection criteria and process used.


There is strong bipartisan opposition to the Administration's decision to redirect funding away from military construction projects towards subsidizing partisan campaign promises with no military value or purpose. Military readiness and military families in Tri-Caucus districts were significantly harmed by this action and Congress needs to understand how DoD made its final determination of which projects to redirect funding from. Therefore, we ask that you provide the following information no later than October 18, 2019:


- An explanation of the method for how military construction projects were selected for defunding, including a complete description of criteria considered for that purpose;
- Documents relating to alternatives considered, to include selection process and criteria or specific military construction projects considered, and reasons for their non-selection;
- Documents put forward by the military departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or the Secretary of Defense expressing objections or concerns with defunding military construction projects in order to construct border wall projects with no military value or purpose;

We trust that you agree that the defense of the nation is paramount and that readiness and the welfare of our military families is critical to that mission. We therefore request and demand for your speedy and fulsome response as the Tri-Caucus and Congress work toward the funding and execution of that national security priority.

Sincerely,


Joaquin Castro
Chair
Congressional Hispanic Caucus


Judy Chu
Chair
Congressional Asian Pacific
American Caucus


Karen Bass
Chair
Congressional Black
Caucus