

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 8, 2011

Honorable John McHugh
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0101

General Ray Odierno
Army Chief of Staff
200 Army Pentagon
Washington DC, 20310-0200

Dear Secretary McHugh and General Odierno:

We write regarding the Department of the Army's reduction in civilian personnel announcement. As you know, to accommodate funding decreases the Army is reducing on-board civilian personnel numbers by 8,741 across the nation. Army installations in Alaska will reduce the workforce by 78 positions.

While we are mindful of budget constraints and understand the need for efficiency in the midst of the fiscal crisis our nation faces, we are concerned about the well-being of workers impacted by this decision. We recognize the Army has stated an effort will be made to ensure the reductions are implemented in a voluntary manner. Many of the Alaskans impacted by this decision have worked for years at the Army bases. They are part of the Army family and deserve to be treated in a manner which recognizes their tremendous service in support of our troops. We also encourage you to transfer workers in other positions that need to be filled. A reduction-in-force used to achieve the desired results would be unacceptable.

We are also disappointed with the timing of the announcement. In November the 4/25 Brigade Combat Team stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson began a ten-month deployment to Afghanistan. The 1/25 Brigade Combat Team of Fort Wainwright is currently deployed. Many of Alaska's military spouses are employed at our installations. Our troops and spouses worrying about job loss on top of deployment creates additional and unnecessary stress for our military families created by the timing of the announcement.

We appreciate the initial information provided to our office regarding the reductions. However we respectfully request to be provided with additional details to ensure the reductions have been planned and implemented in a manner creating the least disruption to installation services, mission readiness and community morale in Alaska. Please provide our staff with a description of each position being eliminated, detailed timeline for implementation of the reduction and detailed background on the analysis conducted to determine where the reductions would occur and how the billets were identified as no longer necessary.

Page 2
December 8, 2011

We also respectfully request the implementation of this initiative and future discussions on work force reduction be conducted openly and in conjunction with the workforce and labor representation. Transparency is imperative to maintaining a healthy work environment and relationship with employees. It is also necessary to retain qualified and dedicated Alaskans who may otherwise seek different employment if there is constant ambiguity about their future.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to receiving the additional information. Please do not hesitate to contact our staffs if you have questions regarding our requests.

Sincerely,


Senator Mark Begich Senator Lisa Murkowski Representative Don Young