

RICHARD M. NOLAN
8TH DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

WASHINGTON OFFICE
2447 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6211

NOLAN.HOUSE.GOV
FACEBOOK.COM/USREPRICKNOLAN
TWITTER.COM/USREPRICKNOLAN



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2308

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

AVIATION
HIGHWAYS & TRANSIT
WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDING AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
CONSERVATION, ENERGY, AND FORESTRY
LIVESTOCK, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND CREDIT

December 10, 2013

The Honorable Paul Ryan, Chair
House Budget Committee
U. S. House of Representatives
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair
Senate Budget Committee
U. S. Senate
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Conference Committee on House Concurrent Resolution 25, Establishing a budget for the United States Government

Dear Chairman Ryan and Chairwoman Murray;

As you continue conference negotiations over the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget, I strongly encourage you to rein in the significant wasteful spending in the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) accounts funding the nation building and infrastructure projects in Afghanistan. These funds could be better spent in deficit reduction and improving American infrastructure that will spur domestic commerce and create many badly needed jobs at home.

The vast majority of OCO funding goes to our continued combat operations in Afghanistan. In the past year, both the House and the Senate have voted to expedite the withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan, and the President has reiterated his pledge to end the U.S. combat mission by the end of 2014. Bringing our troops home as quickly and safely as possible – as desired by the American public – would yield significant budgetary savings.

However, beyond the funding which supports our troops, there are billions of OCO dollars being spent on reconstruction in Afghanistan, money that can and should be brought home to help rebuild America.

To date, the United States has appropriated roughly \$96.6 billion to Afghanistan to aid in reconstruction. At least \$12.3 billion of appropriated, but not yet obligated, reconstruction funds are designated for Afghanistan. An additional \$12 billion is requested in the FY14 budget.

Moreover, as Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) John F. Sopko has pointed out to me and others, some \$60 billion taxpayer dollars have already been wasted on reconstruction projects in that nation – some never begun, none ever completed, with large amounts of money never accounted for. Our experience with waste and corruption in Afghanistan parallels what occurred in Iraq, where the Inspector General calculated another \$100 billion lost to graft, fraud, and incompetence over the past decade.

Surely, there are projects here in America more worthy of \$24 billion U.S. taxpayer dollars. America's infrastructure is literally falling apart in many cases. Tens of thousands of dams, bridges, highways, and wastewater treatment facilities in critical and dangerous disrepair – not to mention our need to expand, upgrade, and modernize these facilities for future populations and the freight and passenger traffic of tomorrow.

Across the oceans, our competitors in Europe and China are expanding their waterways, building high-speed rail, upgrading their seaports, relocating and expanding their airports, and building enormous efficiencies for the future. They are creating jobs today that spur their economies, and building a modern infrastructure for commerce that will put American companies at a tremendous disadvantage.

Chairman Ryan and Chairwoman Murray, with all this in mind I once again respectfully urge you to reallocate \$24 billion from overseas military construction accounts to deficit reduction and domestic construction accounts in the forthcoming amendments to House Concurrent Resolution 25, the congressional budget resolution for Fiscal Year 2014, and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard M. Nolan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being the most prominent.

Richard M. Nolan
Member of Congress