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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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March 28, 2017

Kevin K. McAleenan
Acting Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Mr. McAleenan:

I write to request additional information following a briefing provided to my staff by officials from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Over the last two months, I have repeatedly requested information from the Administration regarding President Donald Trump's plan to secure the southern border of the United States. On March 7, 2017, I requested that DHS provide a briefing for the Committee regarding the acquisition process and funding for the construction of a concrete border wall.¹ I appreciate the presentation that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials provided yesterday in response to my request.

Information presented at yesterday's briefing raises important questions regarding the projected cost of the construction of a border wall. CBP officials have informed majority and minority staff that the DHS budget blueprint for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 will request approximately \$2.6 billion to construct fewer than 75 miles of new border barrier,² resulting in a per-mile cost of over \$36.6 million per mile. I am concerned that the per-mile cost derived from information presented in the briefing would result in a total cost of the construction of the border wall of more than \$66.9 billion for approximately 1,827 miles of border contemplated for construction. That amounts to over \$200 for every American.

CBP officials cautioned that an estimate based on the FY 2018 budget request may not reflect the lower cost of less expensive barrier options that may be used in the future. It is concerning that the cost of construction could also be significantly higher, as the cost of acquiring land currently owned by private individuals was not included in the estimate. Regardless, the \$36.6 million per mile figure is the *only* information, and the closest to a cost estimate that the Committee has obtained from DHS.

¹ Letter from Claire McCaskill, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, to Secretary John Kelly Department of Homeland Security (Mar. 7, 2017).

² Customs and Border Protection, Briefing with Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Staff (Mar. 27, 2017).

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I request that you provide details of your cost estimates on or before April 20, 2017. Additionally, I reiterate my requests in my February and March letters, which remain unanswered. Please contact Joel Walsh at (202) 224-5618 or Joel_Walsh@hsgac.senate.gov with any questions. Please send any official correspondence relating to this request to Amanda Trosen at Amanda_Trosen@hsgac.senate.gov. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member

cc: Ron Johnson
Chairman