



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

September 22, 2016

The Honorable Robert A. McDonald
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald:

As you begin to develop the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Fiscal Year 2018 Budget, I ask that you request substantial funding to address the backlog of critical seismic safety issues at VA facilities in California.

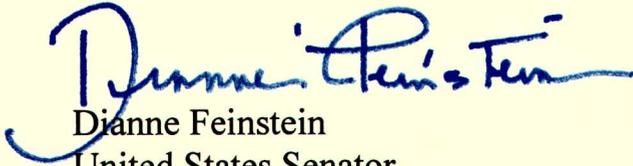
I was disappointed that the VA's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget requested only one \$30.2 million seismic safety project in Long Beach, despite a more than \$1.6 billion backlog of seismic safety projects throughout California that has been identified by your department. Attached is a chart provided by your staff that details major seismic construction projects in Palo Alto, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego that require additional federal funds.

Let me be clear – it is only a matter of when and where the next major earthquake hits in California. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that there is a greater than 99 percent chance of a magnitude 6.7 or larger tremblor occurring in California within the next 30 years. Given this clear and widely-accepted danger, I believe it is incumbent upon your department to request substantial levels of funding every year to address the backlog of seismic deficiencies so that Congress can provide the necessary appropriations as quickly as possible.

I am also attaching a copy of a Government Accountability Office study being released today. This study finds that the federal government must do more to prepare for earthquakes and recommends that federal agencies prioritize funding to mitigate unsafe buildings in earthquake hazard zones. I have repeatedly asked your department to make seismic safety a priority at its facilities in California, and I hope my warnings do not go unheeded.

Thank you for your attention to this critical public safety request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or have your staff contact Tristan Colonius in my office at Tristan_Colonius@feinstein.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Enclosure: GAO Report

cc: The Honorable Shaun Donovan
Director, Office of Management and Budget

DF/tc/je

Attachment: Major Seismic Construction Projects for California VA Hospitals Requiring Funds

| City | ST | Project Name | TEC (\$000) | Amount Funded Thru FY 2017 (\$000) | Future Need (\$000) |
|------------------|----|---|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Palo Alto | CA | Centers for Polytrauma/Blind Rehabilitation, Ambulatory Care and Research | 716,600 | 472,600 | 244,000 |
| Palo Alto | CA | TBD – Seismic correction for Building 7 SCI / Rehabilitation Medicine* | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| Palo Alto | CA | TBD – Seismic correction for Building 6 Research* | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| West Los Angeles | CA | Construct New Essential Care Tower / B500 Seismic Correction and Renovation | 1,027,900 | 50,790 | 977,110 |
| West Los Angeles | CA | Seismic Correction - 12 Buildings | 370,800 | 105,500 | 265,300 |
| San Diego | CA | SCI and Seismic Building 11 | 227,100 | 205,840 | 21,260 |
| San Francisco | CA | Seismic Retrofit/Replace Buildings 1,6,8 and 12 | 346,700 | 180,480 | 166,220 |