

United States Senate

March 25, 2013

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

General Raymond T. Odierno
Chief of Staff of the Army
200 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0200

Dear Secretary McHugh and General Odierno:

I am writing to respectfully request that you reverse the March 20, 2013, decision to off-ramp four Indiana National Guard Units scheduled to deploy in May and July of 2013. I find the “short fuse” decision to abruptly stop these deployments without considering the impact on more than 1,000 Indiana soldiers, their families and employers disturbing.

Although I understand and appreciate the fiscal difficulties the Department of the Army faces during these austere economic times, I do not agree the Indiana National Guard should bear the brunt of this financial burden. The intention of sequestration was to take an across-the-board cut, and in Indiana, we are prepared to do our part in this effort. However, the abrupt off-ramping of these already mobilized National Guard units from their missions is overweighted. Moreover, while the decision is justified by the off-ramping of four Army brigades from deployment to Afghanistan, the Active Component units designated to replace the Guard were not part of this initial off-ramp. This decision appears to be an attempt by the Army to put its own personnel above the mission, and undermines the commitment the Army made to these Indiana soldiers and their families in October 2012 with its mobilization order.

The fact that my office has received three different estimates related to the potential savings of this decision from the Army (\$59 million, \$84 million and \$93 million) indicates to me the Army rushed into this decision and did not fully consider the impact.

Prior to the announcement to off-ramp these soldiers, according to the Indiana National Guard, it has spent up to \$18 million dollars training and preparing to meet mission requirements. In addition to the American tax dollars invested in these units, our soldiers have enrolled their families in Tricare, left their civilian jobs, terminated rental agreements, and suspended academic pursuits. Their employers have made arrangements to adapt to their

expected absence. With this abrupt decision, these commonsense pre-deployment steps taken by our soldiers and the community that supports them are nullified. These dedicated soldiers, their families and the State of Indiana will now have to bear the consequences.

I ask you to not ignore the \$18 million of taxpayer dollars already spent, the time invested by these Indiana soldiers, and the impact on their families and communities. I strongly request you reconsider the deployment of these dedicated National Guard units of Indiana.

Sincerely,



Joe Donnelly
United States Senator