

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 20, 2015

Stella Fiotes  
Executive Director  
Office of Construction and Facilities Management  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave NW (0036)  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Ms. Fiotes,

The medical center construction project in Aurora, Colorado is extremely troubling. The initial total estimated costs of the facility were \$328 million, with an estimated completion date of February 2014. When Kiewit-Turner signed on as the contractor for the project in 2010, the budget nearly doubled to \$600 million. As of November 2012, the total estimated costs for the Aurora VA Hospital were \$800 million, with an estimated completion date of April 2015, according to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report from April 2013.

This past week, the VA revealed that the new estimated cost for the Aurora VA Hospital is \$1.73 billion. However, Congress has only authorized \$880 million for the construction project. The VA is now asking members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to approve almost \$1 billion of additional taxpayer money to complete the hospital, while our veterans in Colorado wait hopelessly for an adequate health care facility. Yesterday, during an Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee Legislative Hearing, Mr. Dennis Milsten, Associate Executive Director of the Office of Construction and Facilities Management, testified that the hospital now has an estimated completion date of late summer 2017.

Although we are pleased that the VA is finally consulting the United States Army Corps of Engineers on the project, the VA needs to provide us with more information on what has gone wrong in Aurora before we even consider authorizing more funds. We hereby request a detailed account of what has been mishandled, who is responsible for the construction delays, and how the mismanagement of our constituents' hard-earned money has been allowed to continue for so long. Since the Administrative Investigative Board is already in the process of gathering evidence, we request that this report be prepared and sent to us no later than one week from today. Additionally, we request a briefing on the subject after delivery of the report to better clarify the findings.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

  
Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress

  
Tim Walz  
Member of Congress