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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

ELIZABETH L. KING, STAFF DIRECTOR
JOHN P. KEAST, REPUBLICAN STAFF DIRECTOR

August 22, 2023

Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin:

We are deeply disappointed to learn that rather than using construction materials that were purchased to secure the southwest border for that purpose, the Department of Defense has begun auctioning these materials off for other purposes. These auctions represent a brazen attempt to circumvent the FINISH IT Act, which was included in both the House and Senate FY2024 National Defense Authorization Act. The FINISH IT Act requires the Department to use these construction materials to secure the southwest border as originally intended, or to transfer them to border states for that purpose.

While we gather more facts about the Department's disposal, and apparent plans to dispose, of approximately \$260 million worth of border wall construction materials, we demand that you take the following steps immediately:


1. Suspend all auctions of border wall construction materials, including those that have been scheduled for August 23 and 30, 2023, according to media reports; and
2. Direct the Department of Defense Inspector General to investigate Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs Melissa Dalton's failure to provide Congress accurate and timely information about the Department's plans regarding the use of these border wall construction materials, despite multiple inquiries about the border wall construction materials from both Senate Armed Services Committee members and staff.

Finally, no later than September 5, 2023, we expect you to provide:

1. A full account of the Department's disposal of border wall construction materials thus far. For each sale of materials, the Department should include: the price that the U.S. Government originally paid to procure the materials, the price for which they were sold by the Department of Defense to a third party, the identity of the third-party purchaser of those materials, and the purchaser's intended use of those materials.
2. A full account of the Department's payments thus far to store the border wall materials, including the total amount that the Department has paid for storage, the precise locations where they were stored and/or are still being stored, and a full list of individuals and entities that received payment to store the materials.

Please be advised that Senate Armed Services Committee Republicans will not consent to a confirmation hearing for the nominee for Under Secretary of Defense for Policy until this letter is answered appropriately.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Deb Fischer
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator



Markwayne Mullin
United States Senator



Ted Budd
United States Senator



Eric Schmitt
United States Senator