

United States Senate

September 8, 2016

The Honorable Robert A. McDonald
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
821 Vermont Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald,

I write today regarding the ownership conveyance of the Miles City Veterans Affairs Medical Complex to Custer County, Montana. I appreciate the VA's ongoing communication with my office, as well as with local officials on this matter. And moving forward, I request that the VA respond in a prompt and thorough manner to requests from county officials to ensure Custer County is ultimately able to make an informed decision that most benefits the community and does not in any way disrupt care for local veterans.

As you may know, at a recent meeting in Miles City, representatives from the VA communicated to local officials that they only had 90 days to assume ownership of the VA property. VA representatives also stated that a failure to act within that timeframe would result in the property being sold at a public auction by the General Services Administration. After voicing strong concerns about this matter with the VA, I was pleased that a subsequent decision was made to do away with such a timeframe, and to recommit to resolving any issues with Custer County prior to the conveyance of the property's ownership.

Before that can happen, it is imperative that the VA provide the county with detailed information about the property itself. Specifically, county officials are seeking the following:

- A letter authorizing the disclosure of utility usage, including but not limited to electricity, natural gas, water, and sewer.
- The square footage and rental rate of the current tenants' leased space.
- The status and documentation of any environmental hazards.
- The status of any infrastructure maintenance or upgrade, including date and type of material.
- The financial details of all expenses and revenues for the last five years.

After discussions with state and local VA officials, it is my understanding that the VA is firmly committed to maintaining a presence in Miles City and that this property ownership conveyance will in no way disrupt the access to or quality of care for local veterans. I appreciate that commitment and we certainly hold you to it.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and for the VA's ongoing engagement with my office. I look forward to our continued efforts on behalf of the veterans in Montana and across the country.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester