

# United States Senate

August 16, 2018

Mr. John Michael Mulvaney  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
Executive Office of the President  
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Mr. Mulvaney:

I am writing to you to urge that federal agencies restructure construction-related funding programs to better align with the realities of constrained construction seasons in Montana and other northern states.

Building robust and modern infrastructure is critical for our nation's small business economy, our future prosperity and our security. Federal grants help provide vital support to ensure our infrastructure supports commerce, education, health services and tourism.

Yet many federal infrastructure-related grant initiatives are structured to announce funding decisions in late spring and summer. The timing of such announcements place an added and unnecessary burden on those executing projects in states like mine, which have shorter construction seasons.

Construction projects are inherently complex. Even shovel-ready projects, when notified of federal awards, require time to assemble the needed resources and materials before construction kicks off. In northern states, winter weather shortens the operational construction window and adds further complexity. When meeting with Montana contractors and businesses, they tell me that the greatest challenges they face are related to funding uncertainty. Once the government awards funding, they must get their projects started and completed before winter weather sets in – which in Montana can be as early as September.

Federal infrastructure grant programs must take into account the varied circumstances associated with implementing construction projects across the nation. I urge Administration leadership and program managers to address this issue either by starting the annual grant competition cycle earlier so decisions can be announced by February, or by implementing a phased decision-making process that prioritizes projects in northern states followed by a second phase that awards projects in warmer southern states.

Revamping the competition and award cycle for federally funded construction projects will greatly improve project results and programmatic impacts and effectiveness. I am willing to work with you and/or individual agencies to enhance these programs which are crucial to our nation's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jon Tester". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Jon Tester