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July 10, 2025

The Honorable Nick LaLota  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Contracting and Infrastructure  
S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Gil Cisneros  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Contracting and Infrastructure  
S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Request for Establishment of SDVOSB Participation Goals in Parallel to DBE Requirements

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member,

I humbly write today to express serious concern about the structural inequities that Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (“**SDVOSBs**”) face as a result of SDVOSB exclusion from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (the “**DOT**”) set-aside program for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (“**DBE**”) administered under 49 CFR Part 26 (the “**DBE Guidelines**”). I respectfully request that this Subcommittee take immediate action to establish SDVOSB participation goals that function in parallel to the existing DBE program.

As a service-disabled U.S. Army veteran and a small business owner, I have experienced firsthand the barriers that SDVOSBs face in accessing transportation-related contracting opportunities. Despite unique sacrifices and burdensome obstacles to participating in government contracting, SDVOSBs are not presumed socially and economically disadvantaged under the DBE Guidelines. As a result, SDVOSBs are effectively barred from competing on a level playing field for DOT-funded contracting opportunities, where DBE participation goals significantly influence procurement outcomes. These inequities persist despite federal recognition of our national significance and the establishment of federal goals for SDVOSB participation in all federal funding.

The DBE program has succeeded in creating opportunity and accountability for underrepresented groups in public contracting, yet no equivalent structure exists for SDVOSBs at the DOT. Our exclusion from the DBE program often leaves us invisible and overlooked in project delivery plans.

### **Why SDVOSBs Need Parallel Goals**

#### **1. Structural Exclusion from DBE Framework**

SDVOSBs receive no participation credit on DOT-funded projects, and therefore, prime contractors have no incentive to engage SDVOSBs when fulfilling DBE goals, even when those veteran-owned firms are equally qualified, capable, and competitively priced.

## 2. **Demonstrated Social and Economic Disadvantage**

Service-disabled veterans face a unique intersection of disadvantages, including disability-related stigmas, difficulty accessing capital, disruption in career pathways and isolation from business networks. This reality meets the very definition of “disadvantaged” outlined in federal equity programs, yet SDVOSBs are not accounted for in DOT policy.

## 3. **National Interest in Veteran Inclusion**

The federal government has made a clear commitment to supporting veterans through SDVOSB set asides at the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Small Business Administration. The DOT should align with this mission by including SDVOSB goals on federally funded infrastructure projects. Doing so would not only honor veterans’ service but also increase competition, resilience, and accountability in the supplier base.

### **Recommended Action**

The veteran community urges the DOT to consider immediate implementation of the following:

- **Establish an SDVOSB Goal Program:** Similar to the DBE program, the DOT should establish an SDVOSB set-aside program with targets for service-disabled veteran participation on federally funded contracts in parallel and not in lieu of the DBE program.
- **Provide SDVOSB Credit on Current Projects:** Create a mechanism by which SDVOSB participation can be scored and incentivized within the existing DBE framework so SDVOSBs can immediately compete on ongoing projects.
- **Encourage Reporting of SDVOSB Utilization:** Incorporate SDVOSB reporting into existing DOT accountability and compliance systems to assess disparities and develop targeted outreach and capacity-building initiatives for SDVOSBs.

### **Conclusion**

Veteran entrepreneurs, particularly those with service-connected disabilities, deserve a fair opportunity to participate in the rebuilding of America’s infrastructure. Without formal recognition or targeted goals, SDVOSBs remain on the sidelines of the very projects our service helped to protect and enable. A parallel SDVOSB program at the DOT would correct this discrimination, create a more competitive and equitable marketplace, encourage States to implement the same standards for SDVOSBs and fulfill the nation’s commitment to those who have served.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I welcome the opportunity to discuss these recommendations further based on my experience in both the military and small business ownership.

Most respectfully and sincerely,

Timothy Polmateer  
Service-Disabled U.S. Army Veteran  
Owner and CEO, B&T Construction Logistics, Inc.