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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

December 15, 2016

Ms. Melanie Renaye Murphy
Director
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Denver Regional Office
155 Van Gordon Street
Lakewood, CO 80228

I write to express my concern about the difficulty veterans in my district are having in getting an appraiser assigned to their VA-guaranteed home loan.

Over the past several weeks, I have heard from more than a dozen different veterans throughout my district who have experienced significant delays in receiving their VA-guaranteed home loan due to the backlog in appraisals for these loans. I have also heard from several realtors and loan officers who find that in their efforts to secure homes for veterans and their families, receiving a VA-approved appraisal is the most challenging and time-consuming requirement. Some of these veterans and their advocates have waited up to nine weeks to even have an appraiser assigned to their case, making them far less competitive as prospective buyers in the housing market.

These lengthy delays present a hardship both financially and logistically by creating uncertainty of housing for veterans. One veteran in Deschutes County, Oregon, for example, recently asked me for help when he realized that he and his family would soon be homeless if their current home was sold and they had not secured a new place to live because they were waiting for an appraisal. Another veteran in Gilliam County, Oregon, tried to refinance his home through the VA, but waited over seven weeks to have his case assigned to an appraiser and received no response or status update from the VA despite repeated attempts to contact them. Another veteran waited so long for his appraisal that his interest rate lock expired and he lost the home due to interest rate increases.

These cases speak to the larger issue that is plaguing veterans in both rural and more urban areas in my district. My office has been in contact with staff members of the Regional Loan Center in Denver, CO, and I understand that everyone is aware of the larger trends leading to a decreasing appraiser population across the country. With those impending challenges in mind, I ask that you please report on what strategies, if any, the VA is utilizing to account for this overall shortage in the appraiser market and reduce the average wait times for veterans seeking an appraisal for a VA-backed home loan. I also fear that this shortage of appraisers will soon have an effect on other government agencies and on the market at large, so please include any discussions you have had with state or national realtors associations, appraiser

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certification and licensing boards, and relevant federal regulators such as the Appraisal Subcommittee (ASC), or the three independent appraisal boards that ASC oversees.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Best regards,



Greg Walden
U.S. Representative
Oregon's Second District