



**Steve Bullock**  
Governor of Montana  
Chair

**Larry Hogan**  
Governor of Maryland  
Vice Chair

April 29, 2019

The Honorable Pete Visclosky  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-405, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
122 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Defense  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-405, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
Vice Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
122 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Visclosky, Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Calvert and Vice Chairman Durbin:

On behalf of the National Governors Association (NGA), we write to you regarding our longstanding commitment to the readiness of our National Guard. Governors appreciate your continued support for National Guard equipment and manpower through annual congressional appropriations. Your support has proven even more critical as disasters have increased in number and severity in recent years, necessitating the response of thousands of national guardsmen and women across the country.

From wildfires to hurricanes, flooding and landslides, our nation continually calls on our National Guard, illustrating the importance of Guard equipment readiness. Guard domestic operations include the use of helicopters, cargo aircraft such as the C-130s, medical evacuation aircraft and numerous vehicles, especially Humvees. This equipment is essential to every disaster relief and public safety mission our states must undertake daily, while also being utilized in overseas missions to support the Total Force.

Congress has been instrumental in funding efforts to help modernize C-130s, F-15s, F-16s, Blackhawks and Humvees in the past. The readiness of the National Guard is dependent upon this continued funding. As Congress looks towards the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations process, NGA requests that you prioritize the following funding efforts in support of our Guard and states:

- **Modernized Equipment:** New and well-maintained vehicles and aircraft ensure greater reliability, more efficiency, and most importantly, readiness for life-saving missions on a moment's notice. The National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA) and the Guard Humvee Modernization Program remain top priorities for governors and our adjutants general across the country. NGA supports continued investment in these procurement programs to help modernize National Guard equipment, ensuring an operational National Guard that can respond to missions both at home and overseas.
- **Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA):** Though the Department of Defense continues to take efforts to identify and isolate PFOS and PFOA contaminants in drinking

water supplies at their facilities, there is significant uncertainty on the roles and responsibilities as it relates to National Guard facilities, which in many instances are owned and operated by the states but are used to support the Defense Department's federal training requirements. Due to the inability of many Guard installations to access the Department's Defense Environmental Restoration Program accounts, the National Guard Bureau has been forced to fund these efforts through Operation and Maintenance funds. This model is unsustainable in the long run and forces the National Guard Bureau to make tradeoffs in overall readiness. NGA requests that Congress provide increased funds to Guard accounts to help identify, test and remediate these contaminants at military installations.

- **Full-Time Support Positions for the National Guard:** Governors and our adjutants general continue to support the growth of National Guard personnel end-strength and the increase of full-time support (FTS) positions. Without this increase, governors continue to have serious concerns about the Guard's ability to maintain a level of readiness that achieves both operational requirements and governors' immediate response needs in the states. The dual nature of the National Guard, and the needs of the nation in responding to both natural and man-made disasters, necessitates the reallocation of manpower and resources to our Guard. NGA requests Congress provide adequate personnel funding to support growth in FTS positions for the National Guard.
- **Counterdrug Program:** States across the country benefit from the National Guard counterdrug program, which helps to support drug interdiction efforts and assists local law enforcement agencies. This critical program encourages continued state-federal partnerships. NGA encourages Congress to ensure stable and predictable funding to support growth of the National Guard Counterdrug Program.

Thank you for your continued support these top NGA priorities for Fiscal Year 2020 Defense Appropriations and for our National Guard.

Sincerely,

Governor Phil Bryant  
Chair  
Homeland Security & Public Safety Committee  
National Governors Association

Governor Gavin Newsom  
Vice-Chair  
Homeland Security & Public Safety Committee  
National Governors Association

Cc:  
Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Chairwoman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Appropriations