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Co-Chair
Governor Asa Hutchinson
Arkansas
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Co-Chair
Governor David Ige
Hawai'i
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APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

March 3, 2020

The Honorable Mark Esper
Secretary
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Secretary Esper,

On behalf of the Council of Governors (Council), we write to you regarding our concern over the recently submitted Department of Defense (Department) reprogramming requests, which were developed outside of the process outlined in one of the Council's foundational documents, *The State-Federal Consultative Process for Programming and Budgetary Proposals Affecting the National Guard (Consultative Process)*. The *Consultative Process* was adopted by the Council, including its federal partners, to ensure effective collaboration, consultation and communication on strategies, plans, programming and budgetary processes affecting the National Guard.

At our recent February 7, 2020, Council meeting, Council governors relayed serious reservations to the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security about the negative impact these reprogramming requests would have on the readiness of National Guard units and service members. Despite those concerns, no amendments were made to the Department's request to reprogram funding away from programs such as the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA), the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) modernization program and C-130J procurement.

This outcome is particularly disappointing because Council governors and the Department have been working for more than six months to improve our partnership, and we have made significant progress on matters that seemed intractable just two years ago. This includes developing methods to better implement the *Consultative Process*, establishing a means for governors to articulate National Guard full time support requirements and improving the Department of Defense's reserve component duty status reform proposal to ensure gubernatorial concerns were addressed.

We call on you to reverse the reallocation of critical National Guard accounts, which are vital to both domestic and overseas missions, and as commanders-in-chief of our respective National Guards, we ask that future budget decisions that impact states' National Guards be more fully discussed with the Council as prescribed in the *Consultative Process*.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Asa Hutchinson".

Governor Asa Hutchinson
Arkansas
Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Ige".

Governor David Ige
Hawai'i
Co-Chair