



Vermont



Washington

December 13, 2010

The Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20318

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Mr. John Brennan
Assistant to the President for Homeland
Security and Counterterrorism
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Paul Stockton
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland
Defense and Americas' Security Affairs
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20318

Dear Secretary Gates, Secretary Napolitano, Mr. Brennan and Assistant Secretary Stockton:

As co-chairs of the Council of Governors (Council), we are pleased to inform you that the Council governors have approved the Joint Action Plan for Developing Unity of Effort (Joint Action Plan) as modified pursuant to the November 8, 2010 plenary meeting of the Council (attached). The Council looks forward to working with the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the White House to implement the actions and recommendations in the Joint Action Plan..

On behalf of our colleagues, we thank you for your leadership and assistance in developing the Joint Action Plan. As we discussed at the November 8 meeting, the Council governors discussed the September draft of the Joint Action Plan with all governors through multiple letters and conference calls. In the course of our outreach, several governors raised concerns regarding the draft and its lack of clarity regarding governors' authorities and the role of his/her National Guard officer as dual-status commander. To address our colleagues' concerns, the Council governors requested language from the Statement of Principles be added to the Joint Action Plan to clarify that the governor and his/her designated National Guard dual-status commander will almost always serve as the lead official when the situation warrants state and federal military response efforts.

After soliciting feedback from all governors as well as governors-elect on the revised draft, which includes not only governors' requested language but also revisions made by DoD, we are pleased to agree to this important document.

We look forward to continuing the tremendous progress that has been made during the Council's first year. We believe the Council's next steps, to include more specific operational guidelines for the use of dual-status command authorities, will strengthen our nation's ability to provide for the safety and security of our citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Douglas", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Governor James H. Douglas

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Gregoire", written in a cursive style.

Governor Christine O. Gregoire

Enclosure: Joint Action Plan for Developing Unity of Effort