

June 13, 2017
The Honorable James Mattis
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C.

Dear Secretary Mattis,

As co-chairs of the Council of Governors, we look forward to working with you to build upon the strong relationship between the nation's governors and the Department of Defense, and to invite you to participate in our summer Council of Governors plenary meeting on July 13th in Providence, Rhode Island.

As you may know, the Council was established by Section 1822 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008 and implemented by Presidential Executive Order 13528. It consists of 10 bi-partisan governors appointed by the President to focus on matters of national security, homeland defense, synchronization and integration of state and federal military activities in the United States, as well as matters of mutual interest pertaining to the National Guard and civil support activities.

The Council provides for the exchange of information and discussion in advance of any formal request, submission or implementation of federal proposals relating to changing laws, regulations or policies affecting the National Guard or military operations in support of State and domestic authorities.

As commanders-in-chief of the National Guard in our respective states, it is critical we work together with the Department on areas that could adjust the makeup of our National Guard forces. Governors are responsible for the safety and welfare of our citizens and managing our forces. Therefore, it is crucial that governors be consulted on proposals affecting the Guard so that we may fully assess the impact to our states. To that end, we look forward to working with you via our consultative process to ensure an ongoing dialogue regarding National Guard budget matters, especially going into the Fiscal Year 2018 budget cycle.

Likewise, we ask that you and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau work specifically with the Council of Governors as you implement the current law requirement to convert National Guard dual-status technicians as required by the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. Governors have been outspoken with their concerns on the impacts to readiness and responsiveness for homeland missions if this conversion is fully implemented, and the Council is the appropriate forum to discuss implementation should a statutory change not be enacted to reduce the conversion amount.

We are confident that the Council can continue to provide a forum for meaningful and productive dialogue to help facilitate progress on issues affecting the National Guard and state-federal military activities. We encourage you and your staff to review the 2010 Statement of Principles and the 2013 budget consultative process agreement to help ensure a consistent dialogue between the Governors and the Department.

The Council of Governors is scheduled to hold its first Governors meeting during the 2017 NGA summer meeting in Providence, Rhode Island. An evening reception will be held for members on the evening of Wednesday, July 12th and a meeting will be held Thursday, July 13th. We invite you to participate in this meeting to highlight your priorities for the Department of Defense.

For your situational awareness, the recently appointed members to the Council include the following governors:

Council of Governors Co-Chairs

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin,
Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy

Members of the Council

Alaska Gov. Bill Walker,
Florida Gov. Rick Scott,
Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards,
Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker,
Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton,
Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens,
Montana Gov. Steve Bullock,
Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam

We look forward to working with you in the future, and to continue to have an open dialogue with the Council. We encourage you to participate in our plenary meetings moving forward.

Sincerely,

Governor Mary Falin
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

Governor Dannel Malloy
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

Cc:

The Honorable Robert Work, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
General Joseph Lengyel, Chief, National Guard Bureau

Attachments:

Council of Governors Charter
Council of Governors Statement of Principles
Budget Consultative Process Agreement