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HOMELAND SECURITY

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December 13, 2006

Secretary Michael Chertoff
United States Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Homeland Security Advisors Council we are requesting that you consider a revised target date for release of the 2007 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance. We recommend that this release occur the first week in January.

During the recent Department of Homeland Security conference held in Washington, D.C. there was some conflicting messaging as to when the 2007 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance was going to be released. The information that was discussed during the conference included the potential of an early to mid December release of the guidance as well as to the possibility that the guidance would be released at year end. At this juncture, having already passed the Congressional deadline and the original target date of November 17th, 2006, the consensus view of the GHSAC Executive Committee is that it would create hardships at the local, state, and Tribal jurisdictions to now release the 2007 Guidance on the eve of the upcoming holidays (i.e, by mid-December as December 19th is the latest word in the field of the potential release date). The release of the 2007 Guidance begins the very specific 90 day period of time that state and local jurisdictions must meet in preparing applications right when the public holidays are beginning.

It is the opinion of the Executive Committee that it would be more reasonable to make sure the 2007 Guidance has been thoroughly and fully vetted and released at the beginning of the year so that state and local jurisdictions can begin to act on the new guidance with the full benefit of the time Congress intended for local, state and Tribal governments to utilize in making application under the competitive process for the Homeland Security Grant Program.

Secretary Michael Chertoff
United States Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Deputy Secretary Michael Jackson
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August 2, 2005

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of the nation's governors, I wish to thank you for joining us during our annual meeting and sharing your visions for the Department of Homeland Security, the development of fusion centers and the implementation of the REAL ID statute. As you could tell from the discussion, all three of these issues are of great concern to governors. We appreciate your goals in reorganizing your department, and we are particularly supportive of your initiative to use the all hazards approach in developing fusion centers. These centers will provide accurate and timely intelligence to help protect our citizens.

We are also appreciative of your willingness to listen to state concerns on implementation of the REAL ID statute. Implementing the REAL ID statute will present us with many challenges. Governors share your concern for increasing the security and integrity of driver's license and state identification cards. However, we realize that it will be a very costly and lengthy endeavor to issue new licenses to our 220 million drivers. Therefore, it is important for us to have a formal mechanism to give input throughout the development of rules and regulations to implement the statute, especially regarding technological standards and verification procedures.

Again, thank you for joining us in Des Moines and for your strong leadership of your vital department. I know that I speak for all of my colleagues in saying that we appreciate your candor and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Governor Mark R. Warner