NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Rep. Tim Moore
Speaker of the House

Sen. Phil Berger
President Pro Tempore

June 10, 2015

Address to:

GEN Carter F. Ham, USA, Ret
NCFA
2530 Crystal Dr., Suite #5000
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioners:

We write to express our support for the North Carolina Army National Guard (NCARNG) and to highlight its role in providing homeland security and responding to disasters, both manmade and natural.

The NCARNG offers talent, skill sets and resources that are unavailable elsewhere within state government. Such capabilities have been well-honed over multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan and domestic operations such as recovery efforts after Hurricanes Floyd and Sandy, security for the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, cyber protection for state government, and helicopter rescue team operations across the state, to name but a few.

The versatility and effectiveness of the NCARNG developed during years of war when the National Guard transitioned from a strategic reserve force, with the associated training and equipment, to an interchangeable operational reserve with first-line equipment and training. Today, it is important that we maintain a robust NCARNG not just to provide for national defense, but also for the protection of North Carolina's citizens and property whenever and wherever the need arises.

We place great value on the National Guard and our nation's military, and in the past have worked diligently in support of their needs. In recent years we have increased operations and maintenance funding for our armories and increased pension payouts. We have also improved educational opportunities through

increases in tuition assistance, and instituted statutory changes recognizing military training in order to fast track service members through the educational requirements for licensure/certification in a variety of trades and careers.

We recognize the need for a properly balanced, equipped and manned Army. As you study and assess the structure of the Army and its force mix, we ask you to consider the potential impacts of any force structure changes or end-strength cuts on the states. For example, we understand that plans are in motion to transfer Apache helicopters from the National Guard to the Active Duty Army. Though attention has been focused on replacing the airframes themselves with Blackhawk substitutes, this transfer of equipment could still result in decreased power generation, loss of logistical capabilities, and loss of a large personnel pool.

Prevailing in today's wars and domestic operations requires a National Guard that can serve in an operational capacity within a routine training and deployment construct. The uncertain future requires agile combat operations and conflict deterrence, and will likely necessitate the continued use of the National Guard as an operational reserve. We must protect the citizen-soldier and the in-demand skill sets that enable them to be called upon at a moment's notice by both our state and our nation. We look forward to partnering with you to maintain a sustainable operational force that can continue to serve the citizens of North Carolina and the United States of America.

Sincerely,

Senator Phil Berger
NC President Pro Tempore

Representative Tim Moore
NC Speaker of the House

Senator Harry Brown
NC Senate Majority Leader

Representative Mike Hager
NC House Majority Leader

Senator Dan Blue
NC Senate Minority Leader

Representative Larry D. Hall
NC House Minority Leader