

October 3, 2011

**Governor Brian Sandoval
State Capitol Building
101 N. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701**

Dear Governor Sandoval:

I am President and founder of the Volunteer Homeland Reserve Unit (“VHRU”). The VHRU is a Nevada not-for-profit corporation that has been designated by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public charity. The organization is made up of over 300 active volunteers who are former law enforcement personnel from numerous local, state and federal police organizations from all over the United States. They average over twenty years of service as law enforcement professionals.

VHRU was established after the 9/11 attacks as a way for these former active public servants to give back to the community, and the State of Nevada, some service that would be helpful in the event of a similar crisis here in our State. Shortly after its organization, the leadership of VHRU reached out to the Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management (DEM). Since 2004, VHRU has had an on-going and very positive relationship with DEM. This made sense because DEM’s mission is “to coordinate the efforts of the State and its political subdivisions together in partnership with volunteer organizations in reducing the impact of a disaster”. VHRU’s own primary mission is to provide assistance and support to public safety agencies in time of crisis. VHRU operates only in a support role, under the direct supervision and control of the public safety agency that calls for our help – however, the organizational structure of the VHRU and the experience of its members adds an extremely well trained group of support personnel to assist first responders.

For many years the VHRU has been, and still is as of this writing, listed on the DEM website as a State of Nevada resource. Additionally, the organization has MOUs with major police organizations (the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, Henderson PD and North Las Vegas PD). DEM has actively supported our volunteer work, including on-going and extensive training exercises, for over seven years. DEM has also

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provided some funding to the organization each year from the federal Homeland Security grant allocated to Nevada annually (EMPG funding). All that changed dramatically in July of this year when the DEM interim Chief wrote a letter to the VHRU challenging the use of ID cards. These ID cards had been approved for the past seven years by DEM, the Attorney General's office (by a senior Deputy Attorney General assigned as counsel to DEM), two Directors of the Department of Public Safety and two Governors who preceded you. The tone of the letter was aggressive, adversarial and completely unnecessary.

At a subsequent meeting that I had with the interim Chief of DEM in Carson City, I was advised that DEM would no longer provide funding to the VHRU; that DEM did not consider VHRU a State resource anymore (despite seven years of faithful service); and that, had he been in place for the prior grant, he would have vetoed it. Further, he indicted that he could find no records in the DEM of an agreement with the VHRU for services of any kind. If the interim Chief had explained that there were financial limitations on expenditures under the EMPG and the grant had to be reduced, this would have been understandable to us. But to reject outright a long term and effective State resource in this manner appears to us to be arbitrary.

To say the least, I was floored. No reasons were expressed as to why this complete about face by DEM had occurred. The VHRU has a proud history of volunteerism in Nevada and DEM knows that; as do the major police agencies we deal with regularly. Putting this in the best light, the interim Chief of DEM was poorly advised by his staff – if he, in fact, checked at all. There are reams of correspondence between VHRU and DEM, over the past seven years and all we have ever heard is very positive feedback about our activities. This also included an MOU between DEM and VHRU that ran from 2004 through 2007. The MOU was not renewed because DEM (as advised by the Attorney General's representative) believed that all its salient features covering the relationship of DEM and the volunteers from VHRU were already covered by the Nevada statutes. No change in the relationship was expressed or understood by DEM or VHRU at that time and funding continued unabated.

In summary Governor, we can not understand how representatives of your Administration (which has been out front encouraging volunteerism in Nevada) can brush aside a fully organized group of highly trained, organized and equipped volunteers who are only trying to help. If a real crisis occurs in Nevada, and we hope it does not, the time to create what the VHRU represents is not when the crisis is upon us.

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We are asking you to give us a few minutes of your time to explain in person what our group has done and what we want to continue to do on behalf of the State and its citizens. There is also a parochial interest at play here, since we too are citizens of the State of Nevada

We look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

**Ted Farace
President
The Volunteer Homeland Reserve Unit
website – www.VHRU.com**