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July 29, 2011

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Subcommittee Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Commerce, Justice and Science
Subcommittee
H-309, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1016 LHOB
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Commerce, Justice and Science
Subcommittee
1016 LHOB
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Rogers, Dicks, Wolf and Fattah:

On behalf of Western Governors, we urge you to fully support the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 budget request of \$1.070 billion for the Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS) Program.

As you are well aware, Western states are experiencing a record-breaking season for extreme drought, floods, wildfire, and severe storms. Our state agencies, local communities, and businesses need sound, reliable predictive information to prepare for and respond to weather events across the West. The JPSS Program is essential to meet this need.

The JPSS Program enables the National Weather Service to develop accurate and reliable global weather forecasts at three days and beyond. Funding shortfalls in the FY 2011 JPSS Program budget have created the likelihood of a delay in launching the next-generation JPSS satellite, which was planned for a 2016 launch date. A delayed launch would result in an observational data gap, less accurate weather prediction model output, and ultimately less accurate weather forecasting. This, in turn, will result in increased risk to lives, property, and infrastructure.

We urge Congress to provide the funding needed to minimize the delay in launching the next generation JPSS satellite and to ensure a continuous and reliable observational record for critical weather prediction models. We recognize the fiscal challenges facing Congress and our Nation at this time, and we appreciate your efforts to increase funding above the FY 2011 appropriation. However, we believe the JPSS Program and the weather predictions it informs are absolutely essential to states, communities, and businesses in the West, and we urge your support for the full \$1.070 billion request. Reduced or unreliable funding will likely result in further

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delays to the observational record and increased costs in out years due to inflation, the need to rebid contracts, and the interruptions in work schedules.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for all of your work to support critical weather observations and modeling for the Western states and our Nation.

Sincerely,

	
Christine O. Gregoire Governor of Washington Chair, WGA	Gary Herbert Governor of Utah Vice Chair, WGA