



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

Post Office Box 12267
COLUMBIA 29211

April 30, 2008

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Mail Stop: 3000
245 Murray Lane, SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff,

Recently Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Julie Myers received a letter from Sheriff P.J. Tanner of Beaufort, South Carolina requesting approval of a proposal for a statewide, regional 287(g) program. I would respectfully ask your assistance in working with Assistant Secretary Myers to quickly consider and approve this proposal.

As you may know, South Carolina has experienced a sharp increase in the number of criminal illegal aliens in its jails – a trend not unique to our state but pressing nonetheless. Our law enforcement community is looking for assistance in combating this problem. One program that could be of significant help on this front is the 287(g) program overseen by ICE. Last November, Sheriff Tanner contacted my office requesting assistance in gaining approval for a 287(g) program for Beaufort County. During multiple discussions with ICE agents, we were told that the preferred proposal for a 287(g) program would now be a statewide, regional proposal, and not a series of proposals submitted on a county-by-county basis.

Taking into consideration the comments and recommendations of ICE officials, my office worked closely with the South Carolina Sheriff's Association, the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED), and the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) to develop a proposal for just that – a statewide, regional 287(g) program. On February 27, 2008, Sheriff Tanner sent ICE this proposal – the first program of its kind in the nation. Under this proposal, South Carolina would use three regional detention centers throughout the state to house criminal aliens before ICE removes the criminals from the state's custody. Each of the facilities will be no more than 100 miles away from any South Carolina town – with the state already having secured agreements to transport illegal alien criminals to these facilities. These regional centers would be staffed by SCDC.

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We think this plan offers a benefit to the state by reducing population problems in our local prisons and provides ICE centrally-located facilities to retrieve criminal alien prisoners for deportation. This should significantly reduce the burden currently placed on ICE to retrieve criminal aliens from 46 different county jails in South Carolina – both in terms of man hours and cost. Additionally, we believe a comprehensive statewide approach such as this will be much more effective in achieving the goal shared by our governments of efficiently removing criminal aliens from our nation and, in the process, making our communities safer. Ultimately, we believe this approach could serve as a nationwide model for other states to better secure criminal aliens.

Unfortunately, Sheriff Tanner experienced some difficulties while navigating the chain of command at ICE. It took approximately seven weeks before any response was provided and only then was he informed that he needed to contact the Assistant Secretary's office directly. Sheriff Tanner immediately responded by contacting Assistant Secretary Myers by letter and now awaits approval.

On April 24, 2008, my staff participated in a conference call with DHS and ICE officials. While we appreciate the dialogue and the commitment to review the South Carolina proposal, I would once again request that this statewide regional 287(g) program be approved as soon as possible and that funding be provided for the construction of the facilities. Citizens expect their various governmental entities to work together to address significant problems. We believe this plan offers a mutually-beneficial partnership between the federal, state and local governments to address a growing problem, and we look forward to working with you to make this program a success and a model for other states to follow.

Thank you for your consideration. If you or your staff needs additional information, or if we can be of assistance in any way, please contact Jeff Schilz in my office at (803) 734-5225.

Sincerely,



Mark Sanford

MS/js.ll

cc: Ms. Julie Myers, Assistant Secretary, Immigration and Customs Enforcement
South Carolina Congressional Delegation
The Honorable Jon Ozmint
The Honorable P.J. Tanner
The Honorable Reginald I. Lloyd