STATE OF NEBRASKA

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Attorney General

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January 15, 2010

Chairman Lavon Heidemann
Appropriations Committee
1004 State Capitol Building
Lincoln, NE 68509

Re: Report on Steps to Address Budget Reductions in LB 1, LB 2 and LB 3

Chairman Heidemann and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

In response to Legislative Bill 1, Section 10, we submit the following as the actions and plans of the Attorney General's Office to implement budget reductions of LB1, LB2 and LB3:

In anticipation of budget reductions and before the Special Session was called, the Attorney General's Office provided across-the-board raises lower than the NAPE employees' 2.5% pay increase for fiscal year 2010. In addition, we imposed in fiscal year 2009 travel restrictions on non-matter or meeting related travel for attorneys to generally no more than one out of state conference. Upon learning that a call for a Special Session would likely be made, we expanded those restrictions to allow only travel in those instances that are case matter related or involve official meetings (except where all travel expenses are covered by another entity). For this current fiscal year, we have lowered personnel costs by reducing one full-time position and reducing a number of part-time positions within my agency.

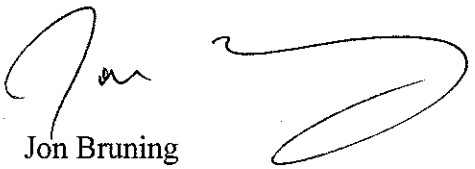
With these measures and the carryover from fiscal year 2009 we can absorb the Special Session cuts for fiscal year 2010.

To address the five percent budget reduction for fiscal year 2011, the Attorney General's Office expects to provide zero across-the-board raises to its employees. We will likely also implement the freeze of salaries July 1, 2010 as proposed by the Governor. We will continue to enforce travel restrictions listed above and will further reduce the number of part-time employees within my agency.

In addition, we will strongly consider not filling any staff vacancies that occur during this biennium. However, during the past six months, this office has seen a dramatic increase in significant and complex litigation cases. The increase is primarily related to constitutional challenges of recent laws enacted by the Legislature. In order to provide an adequate defense of the legislative action, we must be able to maintain a strong veteran staff of attorneys and may be unable to reduce full-time personnel levels.

If you should have any questions regarding this information, please feel free to contact either Dave Cookson or myself.

Sincerely,



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