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To: All Law Enforcement and Investigations Employees and National Leadership Council

This letter provides an opportunity for me to announce transitions in leadership, an update on the Chief's Engagement, and to share upcoming plans for confronting our challenges and opportunities as we move forward as a law enforcement community.

Upcoming Leadership Changes

The pending retirements of Special Agent in Charge (SAC) **Jon Herrick** in Region 1 and SAC **Barb Severson** in Region 6 on January 10, 2015, and the recent retirement of Region 4 SAC **Kevin Rice**, will create a significant void within Law Enforcement and Investigations leadership. To address this, the SACs, the Regional Foresters, the Chief, and I met and agreed on some temporary changes to the LEI leadership structure. The agreed upon changes are detailed below.

- **LEI Leadership for Region 2 and Region 1** - Region 2 SAC **Laura Mark** will assume the additional duties of serving as Acting SAC for Region 1 beginning February 8, 2015. Region 1 Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC) **Tim Walther** will serve as Acting SAC in Region 1 from January 11, 2015 until February 7, 2015. Once Laura assumes the Acting responsibilities for Region 1, she will remain in that position until further notice.
- **LEI Leadership for Region 10 and Region 6**- Region 10 SAC **Bryan Roemeling** will assume the additional duties of Acting SAC for Region 6 beginning January 11, 2015. Bryan will remain in the position of Acting SAC for Region 6 until further notice.
- **LEI Leadership for Region 4**- Region 5 SAC **Scott Harris** is being permanently reassigned to the position of Region 4 SAC with a reporting date of February 8, 2015. Region 2 SAC Laura Mark is currently serving as Acting SAC for Region 4. Laura will continue to serve as SAC in Region 2 and Acting SAC for Region 4 until February 7, 2015.
- **LEI Leadership for Region 5**- The Region 5 SAC position will be outreached and advertised in the near future. I encourage all eligible and interested employees to consider applying. Region 5 Patrol Commander Don Hoang will serve as Acting SAC for Region 5 beginning February 8, 2015 and will serve in that role until the position is filled.

The decision to increase the span of control for two of our SACs by having them take on additional responsibilities was not an easy decision. We all recognize the impacts that our reduced budget is having on the field. We see this as an opportunity for LEI leadership to share some of the impacts of our budget reduction. These changes are temporary solutions as we attempt to strategically align our



organization to fit within our budget appropriations. We plan to advertise the vacant Region 1 and 6 SAC positions in early FY 2016.

The commitment to this reorganization will not be easy and will require contributions from the entire LEI organization. Bryan and Laura will not be able to offer the same presence as Jon and Barb did, but will offer their very best. We also appreciate the support that the ASACs and Patrol Commanders will provide to the affected Regions. The Washington Office is dedicated to ensuring that both the temporary restructuring effort and the long-term solutions are successful. We will provide the necessary support and assistance where needed to mitigate overall impacts. The Regional Foresters are in this with us and they support our temporary leadership changes and they will be an integral part of the long-term solution.

The Regional Foresters have endorsed this approach and are committed to working with us through the difficult process of right-sizing our organization to fit within our funding allocation. This strategy will allow for consistency and continuity of the operations of the affected Regions as we determine and implement a long-term solution. A working group composed of several LEI Leadership Team members and some Regional Foresters will begin meeting in January to continue developing a long-term organizational structure that aligns with our budget appropriations.

I also recognize that this may create some anxiety for many of you. I'm asking for your support, understanding, and patience as we develop a long-term strategy. Forest Service Leadership is committed to a Law Enforcement organization that is appropriately aligned, efficient, effective, safe, and affordable.

Update on Chief's Engagement

I wanted to give all of you an update on some of the issues raised during our calls last spring and summer with the Chief. Although several different topics were discussed during the engagements with the Chief and Associate Chief, some specific issues were identified for action and shared with all of you in the Chief's letter dated June 6 and the Responses to LEI Community Members Questions dated July 10. I would also like to emphasize that although the Chief initiated these actions, it is primarily the responsibility of all of us to ensure that we continue to take the necessary steps to improve and move towards the type of organization that we all want LEI to be.

Improved Communications - I am very excited to share our first ever *Year in Review* with all of you. This report helps to illustrate the diverse and complex work that LEI accomplished in 2014. We plan to provide a similar report on an annual basis for years to come. I believe you will find it informative. The *Year in Review* can be found at the SharePoint link below.

Also, SAC Laura Mark will continue to work with the Forest Service Office of Communications to provide more opportunities to tell our story. Like most law enforcement, we are hesitant about dealing with the media and sharing our accomplishments, but we must do a better job. We have great people doing great things every day- we need to share that with the rest of the Forest Service, our partners, and the public. We are also working on improving the content and delivery of the *LEI Weekly Report*.

In addition, I am pleased to announce the newly created *WO-LEI SharePoint site*. The goal is to provide a single location where LEI personnel can go to find information on a variety of subjects. This includes but

is not limited to current events, previous WO correspondence to the field, forms, searchable 5300 FSM/FSH, and so forth. Understand that it's still a work in progress and the WO is very interested in hearing from the field on what you'd like to see there. The site can be directly accessed at [WO-LEI](#). Comments/suggestions can be sent directly to Patrol Captain Brandy Hill, brandyhill@fs.fed.us.

AUO Audit- LEI personnel receiving AUO were audited by HRM staff with assistance from USDA OHRM. The process included a pre-audit designed to correct/clarify any issues prior to the official audit. We are expecting the results of the audit in January and will work with the union to find the best approach to resolve any findings from the audit.

Climate Assessment- the assessment survey was completed and we are expecting the results and analysis from the contractor in January. The valuable feedback provided will further assist us in addressing the issues important to our LEI community. Thanks to all of you for participating in the process.

Program Review - the draft Statement of Work has been completed; however, we plan to review the climate assessment results in order to further focus the Statement of Work prior to releasing it for bids. Again, this will provide us with additional valuable feedback and suggestions to help us grow and improve. We are expecting the program review to begin in the spring and are hoping for results in early FY16.

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey - The annual survey is another important tool for gathering feedback on LEI and we are listening. We will also use this information to further assist us in making improvements. I encourage all of you to engage in a dialog with your supervisors and share your thoughts about the survey results and think about what all of us can do to promote positive change.

Leadership/Union Relations - we are continuing to work on improving our relationship in several ways, such as our continued work with the Partnership Council and promoting more local partnering. I also speak with Local 5300 President Matt Valenta on a bi-weekly basis to further facilitate communications and collaboration. LEI and Local 5300 leadership have also recently agreed to participate in an intensive Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, face-to-face, Relationships-By-Objectives Program. The program is designed to improve our relationship, build trust, strengthen communications, increase partnering, and allow for proactive problem solving. The initial session is just the starting point and we expect to gain great benefits from the program. Thanks to the Local 5300 and LEI leadership for the commitment to the program and our future.

Hiring and Workforce Planning - we have successfully hired five Captains and a Regional Patrol Commander to fill critical supervisory positions. We are also exploring additional ways to ensure adequate coverage by redeploying existing personnel.

Final Thoughts

Finally, as we collectively continue to work on these and other issues, I want to emphasize that safety is and will remain our number one priority - no exceptions. It is imperative as we work through these challenging times that your safety is the most important thing. With safety in mind, I'm asking each of you to acknowledge the danger of working long hours and the benefits of a work life balance. As we continue to lose additional personnel through retirement and other attrition, I cannot stress enough to you the Chief's direction that "you can't do it all". So, please continue to be very mindful of your safety

and please work with your supervisor and forest staff to prioritize your work and accept that some things that you would like to do just won't get done.

Forest Service Leadership appreciates all that you are doing and hopefully you do as well. I know your professionalism will assist us in addressing the challenges we face. Please remember, these issues can't be solved overnight, but they will be addressed in a timely manner that helps us build a stronger, more efficient, and capable LEI. Please stay safe.

/s/ David L. Ferrell

DAVID L. FERRELL

Director, Law Enforcement and Investigations