



Office of the Attorney General  
Washington, D.C. 20530

March 4, 2011

Mr. James McPherson  
Executive Director  
National Association of Attorneys General  
2030 M Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Mr. McPherson:

This letter responds to the January 25, 2011 letter from various State Attorneys General concerning the difficulties related to procurement of sodium thiopental for use in lethal injections.<sup>1</sup> The lack of availability of sodium thiopental is a serious concern that the Federal Government is currently analyzing.

At the present time, the Federal Government does not have any reserves of sodium thiopental for lethal injections and is therefore facing the same dilemma as many States. The relevant Federal officials tasked with implementing the Federal death penalty have undertaken a review of this matter. They are looking at all applicable options to determine the best course of action for effectively discharging our legal responsibilities, as well as any necessary changes to current Federal death penalty procedures. Bureau of Prisons General Counsel Kathleen Kenney is coordinating our efforts to resolve this issue and is available to discuss it with you; she can be reached at 202-307-3062.

I appreciate and share your concerns about this matter, but I am optimistic that workable alternatives are available that will allow us to carry out our duties.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eric H. Holder, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Eric H. Holder, Jr.  
Attorney General

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<sup>1</sup> The January 25 letter was sent by the Attorneys General of Alabama, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.