



Edward G. Rendell  
Governor of Pennsylvania  
Chair

James H. Douglas  
Governor of Vermont  
Vice Chair

Raymond C. Scheppach  
Executive Director

June 15, 2009

The Honorable Harry M. Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Kerry  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Lugar  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid, Senator McConnell, Chairman Kerry, and Senator Lugar:

Since 1994, the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea has established a legal regime governing activities on, over, and under the world's oceans, codifying over two centuries of customary international ocean law. Governors recognize the importance of international agreements that affect our oceans, and support the ratification of the Convention.

Ratification will enable the United States to protect sovereign interests during considerations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, which oversees claims to seabeds beyond the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and its potential for energy, mineral, and marine resources. The Convention also will allow the U.S. to establish measures to reduce marine pollution, including taking action against vessels suspected of violating regulations within EEZ waters. In addition, ratification will allow the United States to participate in negotiations and decision-making regarding international issues such as deep seabed mining and dispute settlement, introduce proposed amendments to the Convention, or block amendments that are not in the best interest of the nation.

Until the United States is a full party to the Convention, states are hindered from accessing ocean resources, establishing and promoting environmental protections, and curtailed from participating in continuing debate on sovereign rights. Therefore, Governors urge the swift ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Sincerely,

Governor Sarah Palin  
Chair, Natural Resources Committee

Governor Martin O'Malley  
Member, Natural Resources Committee