



Rome, 26 January 2011

Dear Governor Herbert,

First of all, I would like to express my thanks for the important contributions the State of Utah has made to the sustainable development of mountain regions around the world. The international conference, "Women of the Mountains," organized and hosted in 2007 by Utah Valley University, brought people from many mountain regions together to discuss the critical role women play in the economic development and conservation of their own mountain communities. I had the pleasure and privilege of working closely with Dr. Rusty Butler and Ambassador Baktybek Abdrisaev of UVU to ensure a strong international scope for that conference. On 8-9 March, UVU will once again play host in Orem to a follow-up conference dealing with women and mountains. I have again been invited to participate in this important gathering, as the representative of the Mountain Partnership, a voluntary global alliance under the United Nations that promotes sustainable mountain development by encouraging different actors and stakeholders – governments, civil society groups, intergovernmental organizations and the private sector – to work together in a more cooperative and effective manner to achieve common goals.

The purpose of my letter is to explore the prospect of closer collaboration between Utah and other mountain regions throughout the world, by having the State of Utah join the Mountain Partnership as an active member.

Today the Mountain Partnership is made up of more than 170 members and includes national governments, local authorities, UN organizations and even local community NGOs, as well as private companies. It has served to keep mountain issues high on the political agenda at many levels and has led to more effective action on the ground. The Mountain Partnership is officially recognized by the United Nations and is considered by most to be the main international forum dealing with the "mountain agenda". You may be aware that UVU is already a member of the Partnership - we very much value their contribution and active involvement. And we welcome the recent news that the City Council of Orem has also decided to join the Mountain Partnership.

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The Honorable Gary Herbert
Governor of Utah
Utah State Capitol Complex
350 North State Street, Suite 200
PO Box 142220
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-2220

As I'm sure you know better than most, today mountain communities are struggling in many parts of the world to cope with the impacts of climate change and other drivers that are affecting mountains more severely and faster than many other ecosystems. Thus the need is urgent to develop and share innovative solutions that will allow mountain people to face the challenges and even take advantage of new opportunities as they arise. Although the key issues of sustainable development can vary significantly from the developed to the developing world, we have found that mountain communities throughout the world often have more in common than what divides them. In this regard, we are encouraging new forms of cooperation between North and South, where mutual learning and support can lead to win-win solutions for all.

I would like to encourage you to consider having the State of Utah join the Mountain Partnership. Membership would involve no financial commitment – only a willingness to be actively involved in exploring partnership opportunities and sharing successful experiences with other mountain stakeholders. As Utah has been on the forefront in areas such as sustainable tourism, public education and renewable energy, this wealth of experience and good practices, if made available to other parts of the world, could make a significant contribution in helping others find sustainable solutions to their development challenges. I am sure that Utah could also benefit greatly from the closer connections to other parts of the world that would be made possible as a member of the Mountain Partnership.

My hope is that we can effectively engage all Rocky Mountain States as more prominent players on the international scene, building on their existing programs and activities in international cooperation. As the first U.S. state to join the Mountain Partnership, Utah could set an important example and hopefully be a trend-setter for the others.

A positive reply from you is the only thing needed for us to be able to welcome Utah amongst the members of the Mountain Partnership. I would be more than happy to discuss this further with your office and would be able to do so during my upcoming trip in early March, if convenient for you and your staff. More detailed information can be found on our web site at www.mountainpartnership.org.

I look forward to a close and fruitful collaboration.

Sincerely,



Doug McGuire
Coordinator

Mountain Partnership Secretariat