



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY
Washington, D. C. 20503

June 1, 2009

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Attorney General of the State of California
California Department of Justice
Sacramento, CA 94244-2550

Dear Attorney General Brown:

Although I have just assumed office as Director of National Drug Control Policy, I have heard already about your very strong support for efforts to confront the meth challenge in California. My purpose in writing is to encourage you to continue to do all you can to address this problem within California, and to ask for your advice on what needs to be done on the Federal level.

Last week in Nashville, I met with nearly 400 state, local, and federal law enforcement officers at the National Methamphetamine and Pharmaceuticals Initiative. These professionals were very concerned about a resurgence in methamphetamine production. They told me that California is again becoming the epicenter for well-organized, large scale methamphetamine production. Reports indicate that teams of pseudoephedrine purchasers, known as "smurfers," are going from store-to-store, buying the maximum allowable amount of pseudoephedrine products from as many locations as possible, and supplying meth precursors to not only small user labs in California neighborhoods, but also to large-scale "super labs." As you know all too well, the revival of production and distribution of methamphetamine in some areas has renewed public health, safety, and environmental concerns in California.

After hearing from law enforcement professionals struggling to contain this smurfing and meth production challenge, I believe it's important that we look to new steps we can take to respond. There is a promising option I heard a good deal about while in Nashville. In 2006, the State of Oregon made pseudoephedrine a prescription drug, as it was prior to 1976. According to Rob Bovett, Lincoln County District Attorney and principal architect of the Oregon legislation, three years later, the results are significant. He reports that smurfing has been eliminated and that meth production within the state has been reduced. I understand that there have been few complaints from consumers. As you review options to reduce California methamphetamine production Oregon's approach may be one worth considering.

Please do not hesitate to call to offer advice on what, if anything, the Federal government can do to support your important efforts to address the challenge we all face in responding to this dangerous drug. I look forward to meeting with you in person again in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Gil Kerlikowske".

R. Gil Kerlikowske
Director