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STATE OF ALABAMA

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To: All Agencies, Departments, Boards, and Commissions

From: Chuck Malone, Chief of Staff, Governor's Office
David Perry, Finance Director, Department of Finance

Re: Out-of-State Travel Requests

The State of Alabama is striving to improve efficiency and effectiveness in all aspects of state government. Out-of-state travel is one area in which all agencies can make adjustments to insure all employees are taking the initiative to economize & travel without compromising job performance.

Please review the revised, detailed guidelines to the out-of-state travel approval process. The attached guidelines are a framework to plan within, but each travel will be reviewed, adjusted and approved based on the specific details of the individual travel. It also should help expedite the approval process, reduce unnecessary travel, minimize expenses, and produce a more effective, efficient use of taxpayer dollars and our employees' time.

The new out-of-state travel guidelines will be available to start utilizing August 1, 2011. August & September will be the grace period to become familiar with these changes while transitioning from the old forms to the new forms. All travel beginning on or after October 1, 2011, using FY12 monies will be processed using the new forms and guidelines. Two informational sessions regarding the new out-of-state travel guidelines will be conducted Wednesday, July 27, from 2:00pm-3:00pm OR Thursday, July 28, from 10am-11am in the Capitol Auditorium. You are encouraged to send a representative from your office. Cheryl Fondon, Director of Administration for the Governor's Office, and Kathleen Baxter, Accounting Director with the Department of Finance Comptroller's Office, along with their staff, will provide a power point presentation and be available to answer questions.

At a minimum, the following should be observed:

- **Travel only when it is absolutely necessary.** Where possible, telephone calls, video conferences, letters and e-mail should be used in lieu of travel. Only travel expenses essential to the transacting of official state business will be reimbursed.
- **Use the most economical & efficient means of transportation.** Unless a specific exemption is obtained, employees based in the Montgomery River Region area should use motor pool cars, subject to availability, and/or their departmental vehicles assigned to their agency. Airline travel is economy seating, no business-class or first-class.
- **Plan and coordinate travel.** Plan to maximize resources. Do not send more employees than necessary. One employee can attend and return to brief the others. If two or more attend, share vehicle transportation when possible both to and from the destination city. Also, share use of the taxi service and car rental while at event.

Travel issues that require close attention:

- **Pre-approval is required.** Many of our updated guidelines are being implemented to expedite this process. Your agency is asked to review internal procedures to assure efficiency. The Governor's Office will process all airline travel upon receipt

within 2 business days, with the expectation that tickets are to be purchased within 3-4 business days following approval. Vehicle travel will be ready within 3-4 days. Out-of-the-country travel and excessive costly travel will be reviewed by the Chief of Staff. Employees who travel without pre-approval may be personally responsible for their expenditures.

- **The guidelines apply to all employees.** The revised guidelines apply to all employees in each state agency, department, board, and commission, regardless of classification or rank.
- **Personal time occurring before/after state business- related travel.** No employee should personally benefit from state business-related travel. Personal time in conjunction with state travel requires full disclosure. Travel guidelines should not be altered for personal convenience or for your family/friends accompanying you. If alternate arrangements are requested they must be pre-approved and traveler may be asked to make concessions. Early departures/delayed returns present a cost-benefit loss to their department due to traveler's absence. This may not be reflected as a direct monetary loss, but results in lost time and efficiency within their department.
- **Travel expenses must be noted regardless of funding source.** Approval of travel is dependent on the proper use of funding, regardless of its source. The fact that travel will be paid with federal funds, grants or "non-General Fund" dollars does not justify expenses that would not be approved using a different funding source. The same applies to travel paid for by private companies, foundations, trade associations, etc. Travelers attend these events with the State taxpayers and citizens' interest as their primary focus. Additional "personal time" at the expense of these other entities will not be allowed as it appears to be a conflict of interest. Public servants should be good stewards of all monies spent on their behalf.

New Directives to take effect.

- **Effective October 1, 2011:** Meal reimbursements will require a receipt of expenditures with one exception. A meal less than \$10 may be claimed with a simple note stating a meal was purchased for an amount, at an establishment on a certain date. The traveler will certify that the request for reimbursement for meals was for actual expenses incurred in the performance of official State of Alabama travel.
- **Effective December 31, 2011:** All previous travel exemptions issued under the previous administration, or my office in the current administration, will become null and void. All future exemptions will need to be resubmitted, limited in scope and within a time frame of a calendar year: January 1 – December 31. Exemption requests must be approved by the Finance Director and the Governor's Office.