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An Open Letter Addressing the Need for Cooperation between Government and Industry

NCMA has always emphasized its role as a spokesperson for the contracting profession, both Government and Industry. Our focus has always been how we, as contract professionals, can best meet the needs of those we serve both as buyer and seller. This is particularly true as we seek to serve the public in the federal contracting community. There has been a great deal of activity from both the Congress and the Administration on reform of the federal acquisition process and bolstering the acquisition workforce to ensure that public funds are spent prudently. We applaud the intent of these efforts and believe that the dialogue that surrounds that activity can only improve the final outcome. However, NCMA is concerned that one critical element of this process is not being given enough attention. That element is the relationship between Government and Industry working toward a common goal.

We urge all of our colleagues - Government acquisition professionals and their industry counterparts - to engage in a frank and open dialogue around the challenges that face us in the current environment. This means accepting that the other party is not out to "win" at the expense of the other side. We should all appreciate that we have a common goal - to serve the public good. Government and industry may have different perspectives on how to achieve these common objectives. However, it is only by listening with an open mind and sharing options and potential impacts that we can succeed in meeting our common goal amidst the challenges we face. The rapid pace of change has made such communication difficult and we are concerned that a failure of communication could create more challenges in the acquisition process that sub-optimize the potential for win-win acquisition improvements. Let's not allow open communications to break down and impede our progress.

Each of us must remember the purpose that our profession has always served. Government and industry must work together to find effective ways to implement changes to the acquisition process so that user needs are met affordably amidst ever increasing budget pressures. NCMA stands ready to continue to assist in this dialogue, as it always has, as the neutral forum for this great profession.

On behalf of the NCMA Board of Directors,

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Executive Director