

Representative John Lively  
Chairman, House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Services

Re: HB 2428

Dear Chairman Lively:

We the undersigned appeal to you and all Veterans Committee members to reject HB 2428.

As former members of the Oregon State Defense Force (ORSDF) we are appalled at the recent actions of Adjutant General Hokanson. He has ordered that the ORSDF be disbanded. When several of our members sought a meeting with him he declined. His "Open Door" policy apparently does not extend to the ORSDF.

Gen. Hokanson may be well schooled on how the Active Duty Army deals with Emergencies given his vast experience on Active Duty, however, its clear that he has no concept of how the Military Department has dealt with Emergencies, large and small, over the past several decades under the leadership of Major General Rees and Brigadier General Caldwell. It is not an over statement that during the massive wind storm on the Oregon coast in 2007 the Military Department saved numerous lives of Oregon citizens in large part due to the deployment of ORSDF forces to local governments as Liaisons. This approach that was honed under Gen. Rees and Caldwell in the Reorganization of the ORSDF in 2006 paid great dividends by providing accurate timely information to the Military Department Headquarters, which resulted in fast efficient delivery of life saving personnel and equipment.

Additionally, The ORSDF has added a tremendous asset to Guard Commanders in the processing of soldiers into State Active Duty. This may seem trivial but there are documented instances where Traditional Guard staff placed injured soldiers who were under federal care on State Active Duty. In several cases these solders were re-injured but now became the responsibility of the state due to poor judgment by the local commander. These instances resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in SAIF claims that the Military Department is still paying. Gen.

Caldwell emphasized this important process of the Mobilization process done exclusively by the ORSDF staffs that were part of the local unit and the incidents of claims on prior injured soldiers dissipated.

In short, the emergency management mission that has been the sole focus of the Volunteer ORSDF for decades is being kicked to the curb for no good reason. It seems disingenuous at best to suggest that this is a simple reorganization, as that could be accomplished without legislation. This is a clear move to kill the ORSDF, nothing less.

Again we ask that you recognize this Bill for what it is and insist that the Military Department accomplish its current statutory responsibility and keep the ORSDF in a strong volunteer status to assist the citizens of Oregon.

Former Oregon State Defense Force Members;

KENNETH F. BROADWATER  
COL IN ORSDF 2TD COS  
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