

# OREGON EARTHQUAKE AWARENESS™

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**“WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR BUT SHEAR ITSELF”™**

**Date: May 20, 2013**

**To: Rep. Greg Matthews Vice-Chair  
Rep. Shemia Fagan, Vice-Chair  
Rep Julie Parrish, Vice-Chair  
Rep. Deborah Boone  
Rep. Sal Esquivel  
Rep. John Huffman  
Rep. Brad Witt**

**House Veterans’ Services and Emergency Preparedness**

**From: James Bela, President and Founder  
Oregon Earthquake Awareness™**

**Re: May 21, 2013 Work Session**

**SB 33:** Modifying list of state agencies required to designate liaison for emergency preparedness and response.

**SB 33-2:** Adding SECTION 2 establishing the Task Force on Resilience Plan Implementation.

THURSDAY

Date: May 21, 2013

Time: 1:00 P.M.

Room: HR E

I. ORAL TESTIMONEY PRESENTED MAY 14, 2013 on SB 33 and Dash -1 Amendments [SB 33-1 (LC 605) 5/13/13 ] -- *not adopted*).

My name is James Bela, president and founder of **Oregon Earthquake Awareness™** (founded 1991). I have B.S. and M.S. degrees in Civil Engineering (soil mechanics and foundations, or geotechnical engineering); and an M.S. degree in Engineering Geology – all from Stanford University.

I have conducted geologic hazard studies in Oregon;

<http://www.oregongeology.com/pubs/og/OGv41n09.pdf>

[http://ngmdb.usgs.gov/ngm-bin/pdp/zui\\_pdpViewer.pl?id=8097](http://ngmdb.usgs.gov/ngm-bin/pdp/zui_pdpViewer.pl?id=8097)

and also performed geologic quadrangle mapping here in the Willamette Valley, including the Salem West 7.5 Min. Quadrangle map (GMS 18) - upon which the State Capitol resides: atop **Qlg Linn gravel** [stratified fine to coarse *gavels* – well cemented in their ways (and *means*)]. *Savvy* state

*representatives* always consult that geologic map prior to *elections* - for site-specific advice on how to be elected by a *landslide*! <http://www.oregongeology.org/pubs/GMS/gms018.pdf>

The preceding item of today's agenda: **Informational Meeting** on "Update on Development of Disaster Debris Management Plans" – certainly, as regarding *Vernonia* and *Tillamook*, provides a lot of *flood* for thought!

I begin my testimony with this wise advice from filmmaker and journalist Billy Wilder:

"If you're going to tell people the truth, be *funny* or they'll kill you."

So I'm giving this my best shot:

Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson are going camping. They pitch their tent under the stars and go to sleep. In the middle of the night Holmes wakes Watson up: "Watson, look up at the stars and tell me what you deduce."

Watson: "I see millions of stars and even if a few of those have planets, it's quite likely there are some planets like Earth, and if there are a few planets like Earth out there, there might also be life."

Holmes: "Watson, you idiot, somebody's stolen our tent!"

This was recognized back in 2001 as perhaps "the world's funniest joke;" but this Committee is proving a *tougher* sale and audience than I *thought*. But the point is . . . THINGS ARE *NOT* ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM! And as I have pointed out in my letter of March 8, 2013 to Governor Kitzhaber (additional submitted testimony): "someone has stolen our heretofore *public meetings* process!"

Governor Kitzhaber can, I believe, just send a *letter* to these 13 newly named agencies, in lieu of SB 33:

- (a) **The Department of Consumer and Business Services;**
- (b) **The Department of Corrections;**
- (e) **The Department of Justice;**
- (f) **The Department of Land Conservation and Development;**
- (i) **The Judicial Department;**
- (k) **The Oregon Department of Aviation;**
- (m) **The Public Utility Commission of Oregon;**
- (p) **The State Department of Fish and Wildlife;**
- (r) **The State Fire Marshal;**
- (s) **The State Forestry Department;**
- (t) **The State Marine Board;**
- (u) **The State Parks and Recreation Department; and**
- (v) **The Water Resources Department.**

That letter can secure the *names* and *commitments* of these requested *individuals*. Then they can “practice” together in a joint exercise - *every year* during the GREAT SHAKEOUT DRILL!  
<http://www.shakeout.org/oregon/>

The Oregon Military Department, for whom this expanded list is *intended*, wants (always) a “linear” path or *chain-of-command*. Reading between the lines, I am *supposing* that this list is being sought to assist tracking of cost-accounting expenses (or *allocated* “resources and assets of the agency”) during an emergency – for *reimbursable* expenses later to be made good by FEMA.

## **But a *DISASTER* IS NOT JUST A *BIG EMERGENCY!***

The problems in a *disaster*, particularly in an *earthquake disaster*, are (in reality) **Horizontal** – not *Linear!* And social science performed in the aftermath of the 1995 Kobe earthquake has shown that effective response in that disaster more realistically flowed “from the bottom up;” and not “from the top down!” So these so-called **designated individuals’ names** can more simply be *exchanged* yearly during the aforementioned statewide planning exercise. And that’s all there really is to it!

**“The significant problems we face cannot be solved by the same level of thinking we used when we created them.”** Or, as my cardiologist friend likes to always remind me: “THE ANSWER IS *MONEY!* WHAT WAS THE *QUESTION?*”

I’m a *veteran* – but of these previous statewide and city of Portland *Task Forces*:

The Oregon Seismic Rehabilitation Task Force  
[http://www.wsspc.org/awards/1997/1997\\_OutreachDOGAMI.pdf](http://www.wsspc.org/awards/1997/1997_OutreachDOGAMI.pdf)

Joint Interim Task Force On landslides and Public Safety  
<http://www.oregongeology.org/sub/Landslide/LandslideTaskForceResults.pdf>

City of Portland Seismic Task Forces: I and II  
<http://www.portlandonline.com/bds/index.cfm?a=68039&c=48224>  
<http://www.portlandonline.com/auditor/index.cfm?c=28673>

And, as precautionary *forewarning* regarding the dash – 1 Amendment: adding SECTION 2 establishing the Task Force on Resilience Plan Implementation . . . my comment would be that *all* such previous and *similar* Task Forces have suffered from the “Will Rogers and Everett Dirksen Effect:” *Whenever a member moves from a state agency to a Task Force – it raises the IQ of both bodies!*

It is not only too *premature* , but also very *unwise* to buy-in to an Oregon Resiliency Plan of 50 years. **We don’t, in my view (having studied this issue now for more than 22 yrs) have 50 years!** FIFTY YEARS was the result of a *motion* instituted by the Oregon Seismic Safety Advisory Commission (OSSPAC) – without benefit of Public Hearing, rigorous discussions and debates regarding the merits thereof, or *demonstrated* efficacy!

Unfortunately, the Oregon Resiliency Plan is but another *variation* of so-called TEXAS SHARPSHOOTING: wherein one shoots point blank at the side of the Barn; and then *draws* targets concentrically around the resulting bullet holes. In other words: “Shoot first and *declare* whatever you hit was the *target!*”

Noting that (k) **The Oregon Department of Aviation** is now proposed in the amended **SECTION 1**. ORS 401.054 of SB 33 -- the Oregon Resiliency Plan *is a lot like my flight instructor’s rubric for making an emergency landing: try to hit the softest, cheapest thing as slowly as possible!*”

“The problem with doing nothing,” of course, “is that you never know when you’re through!” And this violates what we’ve all just heard *previously* during the Informational Meeting -- Update on Development of Disaster Debris Management Plans:

**“BE PREPARED / GET INVOLVED!”**

**“The time is always right to do the right thing.”**

SB 33 is not really necessary. SB 33-1 or SB 33-2 is neither **right thing**, nor the right **“stuff!”** Said amendments are “stuffing” an innocuous housekeeping attempt, made ostensibly at the request of the Oregon Military Department, with an unneeded Task Force. Both (a) the Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission (OSSPAC); and (b) a duly constituted and appointed Legislative committee -- can and *should* take responsibility and ownership of this important issue.

If something can be *delayed* (for 50 yrs); it can also *be expedited!* See my today’s Public Hearing submittal: **MAGNITUDE 9.11 EMERGENCY!.pdf** for a list of concrete and categorized *priorities*, one for each **unit** of a Giant Magnitude 9 Cascadia Megathrust Earthquake and Tsunami.

Confucius Say: **“To see what is right, and not to do it, is lack of courage.”** *Not* a Task Force! *Not* a Resiliency Plan for 50 Years. One-step-at-a-time is *fine* . . . unless you’re walking the plank. Nor should the present Oregon Legislature be let off the *Captain Hook* of *responsibility* by being sold the *line* that earthquake resiliency is a *marathon* . . . and not a *sprint*. The Greek messenger *Pheidippides*, actually a soldier (and a *veteran*) in the military department; ran the entire distance from the Battle of Marathon to Athens *without stopping*, before reportedly *collapsing* and *dying!* Bummer!

And that is the significant problem and lesson of *earthquakes*. When buildings and infrastructures *collapse*, many people will *die!* The Oregonians suffering through the next Giant M 9 Cascadia Megathrust Earthquake and Tsunami will be *looking back* to those legislators making the important decisions *today* . . . ( not to *those* making decisions for 50

years *hence* when, alas, many of us here in this room will already be *dead and gone* . . . certainly . . . most likely -- *subducted* ourselves)! May we rest-in-peace; and not in *pieces!*

It's now been 24 years since the 1989 Loma Prieta World Series earthquake became a *wake-up call* for Oregon . . . leading to both the establishment of: (a) the Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission (OSSPAC); and (b) specific building code requirements for *site specific seismic hazards investigations* for essential, hazardous facilities, major structures, and special occupancy buildings (hospitals, schools, utilities, public works, police and fire stations) -- through **SB 96** back in 1991; as well to an *unprecedented* (really) *scramble* to upgrade western Oregon's seismic building codes from: Seismic Zone 2B to Seismic Zone 3.

<http://www.oregon.gov/omd/oem/pages/osspace/osspace.aspx>

[http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/HAZ/docs/earthquakes/08\\_seismic.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/HAZ/docs/earthquakes/08_seismic.pdf)

[http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/bcd/programs/structural/Seismic\\_Codes-Oregon\\_History\\_020712.pdf](http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/bcd/programs/structural/Seismic_Codes-Oregon_History_020712.pdf)

If we had retrofitted or strengthened *one bridge a year*; we would have by *now* already completed **24** bridges! . . . allowing us to *at least* claim some responsible level of progress.

Like *Peter Pan* . . . Oregon has to finally *grow up* and attack its *inability* to set clear *priorities* to achieving both earthquake *safety* and earthquake *preparedness*. *Resiliency*, whatever that is, will take care of itself. What we have here, in the so-called 50-year Oregon Resiliency Plan; is little more than a **Trojan Horse** at the Gates, with the Cascadia Earthquake and Tsunami waiting within; happy to be *welcomed* into our schools, our businesses, our homes, our *most vulnerable* coastal communities -- and unfortunately our *public policy*.

I URGE THE COMMITTEE, *therefore*: LET THIS ENTIRE BILL **SINE DIE** IN COMMITTEE and DON'T SCHEDULE A WORK SESSION!

"There is *wanting* to do the right thing, *doing* the right thing . . . and *looking like* you're doing the right thing!" The legislature is already *empowered* and encouraged to establish its *own* committee on earthquake preparedness and *prioritizations* for enhanced public safety, economic and community resilience, and sustainable recovery.

And finally, keep in mind: **“Even if you are a minority of one, the *truth* is the truth!”**

And that, my dear *Watson*, in itself . . . is kinda *funny!*

Respectfully submitted,

**James Bela**

James Bela  
President and Founder.  
Oregon Earthquake Awareness

Oregon Earthquake Awareness™ / The *Quake* Northwest™  
"We Have Nothing to Fear But Shear Itself" / "We're All *Subducting* In This Together"  
"It takes everyone getting together in *cahoots!* – Dennis Mileti

"Do not look back in anger, or forward in fear, but around in awareness." -- James Thurber