

Analysis

Item 21: Department of Public Safety Standards and Training

2017 Fire Season

Analyst: Julie Neburka

Request: Increase Other Funds expenditure limitation by \$623,260 for expenses associated with training Oregon National Guard members for fighting wild-land fires during the 2017 fire season in Oregon.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means recommend the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training Other Funds expenditure limitation be increased by \$623,260, for 2017-19 only, in a budget reconciliation bill during the 2018 legislative session, for expenses associated with training Oregon National Guard members for fighting wild-land fires during the 2017 fire season in Oregon.

Analysis: The Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) provides the wild-land fire fighting training required by *Op Plan Smokey*, an interagency agreement between the Oregon Department of Forestry and the Oregon Military Department which allows Oregon National Guard members to support wildland firefighting efforts when sufficient civilian firefighting resources are not available. Training includes classroom, hands-on, and live fire firefighting training, at the end of which trainees receive Wildland Firefighter 2 certifications and are dispatched to fire lines throughout the state. Training costs incurred by DPSST are reimbursed by the Oregon Department of Forestry. The agency requires additional Other Funds expenditure limitation in order to receive and account for the reimbursement.

Over a period of thirty days last summer, DPSST provided firefighting training to more than 550 National Guard soldiers and airmen, on an accelerated training schedule. The agency incurred costs to train, feed, house, and equip these Guard members, as well as to pay for qualified fire service instructors from Arizona, Illinois, Missouri, and New Jersey that were needed to supplement the number of available in-state fire training instructors. Payroll costs for agency and other staff working on firefighter training totaled \$418,460, meals and lodging totaled \$152,600, with equipment, supplies, and classroom materials totaling \$52,200.

The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means recommend the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training Other Funds expenditure limitation be increased by \$623,260, for 2017-19 only, in a budget reconciliation bill during the 2018 legislative session.

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Department of Public Safety Standards and Training
McDonald

Request: Increase Other Funds expenditure limitation by \$623,260 for expenditures related to National Guard training during the 2017 fire season.

Recommendation: Approve the request during the 2018 Legislative Session.

Discussion: The Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) is responsible for providing wildfire suppression training to Oregon's National Guard members. These men and women are activated by the Governor, at the request of the Oregon Department of Forestry, under a standing agreement called *Op Plan Smokey*. For the 2017 fire season, five teams of more than 550 Oregon National Guard members completed the Oregon Public Safety Academy wildland firefighter training. These service men and women were outfitted with equipment, trained, housed and fed over the duration of 30 days.

Out of the five teams activated by Governor Brown, one team had previously completed wildfire training during the 2015 season and only needed a refresher course. The remaining four teams required completion of the Wildland Firefighter 2 training class with DPSST, which takes place over the course of six days, from arrival at the academy to deployment. This year, these service men and women were deployed to the Blanket Creek, High Cascades Complex, Horse Prairie and Chetco Bar fires.

Due to the volume of personnel deployed this year, DPSST fire training staff requested the support of fire service instructors from around the state as well as the assistance of qualified instructors from Arizona, Illinois, Missouri and New Jersey.

The agency reports expenditures associated with this effort total \$623,260 and requests additional Other Funds expenditure limitation to cover the cost. The revenue to support this increase will come from the Oregon Department of Forestry as reimbursement for *Op Plan Smokey* related expenditures, per the interagency agreement.

Legal Reference: Increase the Other Funds expenditure limitation established by chapter 583, section 2(1), Oregon Laws 2017, for the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, Operations Division, by \$623,260 for the 2017-19 biennium.



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Public Safety Standards and Training

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November 30th, 2017

The Honorable Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chair
Interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301-4048

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

NATURE OF REQUEST

The Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) is requesting an increase in Other Funds Limitation in the amount of \$623,260.

BACKGROUND

DPSST is requesting Other Funds expenditure limitation increase of \$623,260 for expenditures related to National Guard training during the 2017 fire season.

It is DPSST's honor and privilege to train members of the Oregon National Guard who have volunteered to help support our state's wildfire suppression efforts. These men and women are activated by the Governor, at the request of the Oregon Department of Forestry, under a standing agreement called *Op Plan Smokey*. In 2017, over 30 days, more than 550 citizen-soldiers and citizen-airmen from around the state came through the Oregon Public Safety Academy for wildland firefighter training. Under *Op Plan Smokey*, DPSST costs are reimbursed by the Oregon Department of Forestry.

The training provided to the members of the Oregon National Guard is the same training that is required of all public and private wildland firefighters. Many people know this as "red card" training. In order to dispatch our state's citizen-soldiers and citizen-airmen to the fire lines sooner, the training was provided over four, 13-hour days, instead of the traditional five, eight-hour day format. Training included classroom, hands-on, and live fire training elements.

During the 2017 wildfire season, Governor Brown activated five teams on Oregon National Guard personnel to assist with wildfire suppression efforts. The first team had previously completed wildfire training during the 2015 wildfire season and only needed to be equipped and be provided refresher training. The other four teams required equipment and the complete Wildland Firefighter 2 training class. Under *Op Plan Smokey*, DPSST works on a seven-day cycle with the Oregon National Guard. On the first day, members are deployed from their respective stations around the state and arrive at the Academy for the issuance of wildland personal protective equipment. The next four days are classroom and hands-on training. The final day is deployment to the fire lines.



This year, Oregon National Guard personnel were deployed to the Blanket Creek, High Cascades Complex, Horse Prairie, and Chetco Bar fires. This is in addition to fires that were supported by aviation assets of the Oregon National Guard.

Due to the volume of personnel deployed this year, DPSST fire training staff was augmented by fire service instructors from around the state. To address an in-state resource shortage, DPSST also requested assistance from other states and received qualified instructors from Arizona, Illinois, Missouri, and New Jersey. With the approval of the City of Salem Fire Marshal, and with personal notification to all adjacent property owners, DPSST burned a number of acres of grassland on campus to allow the members of the Oregon National Guard to receive live-fire hands-on training.

DPSST housed, fed, equipped, and trained the members of the Oregon National Guard at the Academy while other activities on the calendar continued to take place without interruption. DPSST staff from all Divisions, and our contract food provider Aramark, worked in unison for countless hours to help support the training and the citizen-soldiers and citizen-airmen at the Academy.

ACTION REQUESTED

The Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) requests that the Interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means increase DPSST's Other Fund limitation by \$623,260.

LEGISLATION AFFECTED

Increase Other Fund appropriation established by Chapter 583, Section 2(1), Oregon Laws 2017, for the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, by \$623,260 for the 2017-19 biennium.

Sincerely,



Eriks Gabliks
Director