

Proposed Testimony/Narrative:

Co-Chair Winters, Co-Chair Stark, members of the Sub Committee, I am Colonel Jenifer Parady, the Mission Support Group Commander for the 142d Fighter Wing. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of SB 5532 and specifically the mission of the 142nd Civil Engineer Squadron located at Portland Air National Guard Base in Portland. Before I begin I would like to share with you that I am a 25-year resident of the City of Portland, where my husband and I elected to raise our three children, all of whom are high school students in the Portland Public Schools. I have proudly served over 32 years in our nation's military, 24 of those years in the Oregon Air National Guard.

The 142nd Fighter Wing's Civil Engineer Squadron is a key supporting element to the 142nd Fighter Wing's Aerospace Control Alert (ACA) mission. The ACA mission provides national security to the Pacific Northwest with its F-15 fighter jets and crews, ready and on call 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. The Civil Engineer Squadron is a predominantly traditional part-time, military organization with a limited full-time Federal staff. The primary function of the eight-person Federal staff is to organize, train, and provide support to the 101 members of the part-time military force. The majority of the full-time staff is comprised of State Employees. The National Guard Bureau model for an installation the size of the Portland Air National Guard Base requires and authorizes 29 maintenance personnel. We are currently authorized by the state to hire only 20 of our 29 Federally authorized positions, or 60 percent. The primary mission of the State workforce is to provide critical facility and grounds maintenance and repair to 64 buildings culminating in over 740,000 square feet on approximately 220 acres. Many of these aging buildings house aircraft assets valued at over \$50 million each, contain climate sensitive support and repair equipment, and critical communications infrastructure necessary to support

the 24-hour Alert mission. Some of our most critical facilities are the crew living quarters that house the alert crew and the three aircraft always on status, poised and ready to respond when our nation calls.

To give you an idea of the importance of the contribution of the State Maintenance staff, during the recent bouts of inclement weather experienced across the city, the State maintenance staff was responsible for working around the clock to operate snow and ice removal equipment to keep the military ramp and taxiways clear. While the Port of Portland maintains the main runway and taxiways as part of our Airport Joint Use Agreement (AJUA), it is solely the responsibility of the Civil Engineer Squadron's full-time State maintenance staff to keep the ramps clear and passable, particularly from ice. Jets are unable to taxi over ice due to the risk of ingesting a piece into an engine and causing upwards of \$2 million in damage, or potentially rendering the aircraft completely un-flyable in a time of emergency. In addition to the aircraft ramp areas, the State workforce must also clear and maintain all of the base roadways to allow for safe travel of employees to and from their work centers, as well as for safe passage of security patrols and emergency response vehicles.

Another example of the critical role of our State workforce was demonstrated during a recent power outage that occurred after normal duty hours. In our most critical, 24-hour operations buildings we rely on redundant, backup generator power to maintain continuous operations during a loss of primary power. When the civilian utility company restored power in the area during this recent event, a surge was sent back through our system causing over \$50,000 in damage to the back-up generator rendering it unserviceable, destroying a number of circuits in the command center building, as well as in climate controlled rooms housing critical information systems. As a result, two electricians from our State workforce were recalled to triage the

damage, ensure work place safety, and to perform immediate repairs to the most critical areas in the building.

On demand response to emergency situations is merely one aspect of the State workforce's responsibilities. Of equal importance is their responsibility to perform periodic preventative maintenance tasks. These tasks range from work on critical fire suppression, fire detection, structural, HVAC and electrical systems, to more routine day to day tasks. Due to the critically low manning levels we are currently operating with, we have been forced to continually defer periodic preventative maintenance resulting in a backlog of over 1,900 preventative maintenance work orders. As a result, the fire suppression system in the Wing's primary maintenance hangar, which houses up to six aircraft worth \$50 million each, and over 400 maintenance personnel, is inoperable and now requires significant repairs.

In the early morning hours of a Saturday this past January, an intruder was able to scale the perimeter fence in a dark corner of the base and gain unauthorized access to a sensitive area of our 24-hour Base Command Post building. This incident not only put personnel on shift in danger, but allowed an unauthorized individual to be in a place where, had they taken another 20 steps out an adjacent door, they would have accessed the secure flight line which houses a portion of our F-15 fleet. This intrusion was possible due to an un-serviced personnel door lock, overdue for maintenance that had unknowingly frozen in the "open" position, which allowed the intruder to gain access to this restricted area.

Just like the 173rd Fighter Wing, the 142nd Fighter Wing enjoys a strong State - Federal partnership. The National Guard Bureau supports the Nation's Air National Guard Civil Engineer Squadron's full-time facility and maintenance requirements through a long standing Agreement with the State of Oregon. Under this agreement, the National Guard Bureau and the

State of Oregon share the costs of this program in that the Federal Government covers 80 percent of expenses, with investment from the State of Oregon, whereby the remaining 20 percent of expenses are paid with State funds.

Beginning in October 2017, the 142nd Fighter Wing is required to absorb a new, must-pay storm water utility fee. These fees vary from month to month, but on the average total approximately \$50,600 per month, or \$1.1M per biennium. State resources do not currently exist to cover the \$220,000 non-federal share of this bill. In order cover this cost the Civil Engineering program may need to eliminate eight positions. When taken into account with two other positions scheduled for elimination we will have reduced our state workforce to 10 of 29, or 35 percent of authorized. Loss of additional staff will further degrade our ability to retain adequate levels of maintenance trades and skills, leaving us without critical mission support or the ability to respond to after-hours emergencies.

This afternoon I have shared a number of recent, specific examples of some of the most critical circumstances faced by the 142nd Fighter Wing intending to illustrate the near catastrophic impact funding issues have culminated in. The consequences to our ability to successfully execute the mission our state and nation relies upon is in jeopardy. When conditions such as the aforementioned occur in the future, this could most certainly result in the shutdown of our ACA mission. Further, the health, safety and welfare of the employees of the 142nd Fighter Wing will be placed at risk.

The support you provide to the Oregon Military Department, the Oregon Air National Guard, the 142nd Fighter Wing, and the surrounding community will always be greatly appreciated. It is truly an honor to address you today and I offer my personal thanks to the members of this committee for your continued support.