

To: the Chair and Members of the Committee on Veterans and
Emergency Preparedness

I urge, in the strongest of terms, passage of HB 2730.

Oregon faces profound natural and man-made risks. These include wild land fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, industrial accidents, and even the threat of radiological devices (dirty bombs) being hidden in shipping containers coming into the Port of Portland.

What is troubling is that the Oregon's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has demonstrated that it is not up to the task of responding to any of these threats and risks in a meaningful and comprehensive manner. There have been two Secretary of State audits/reports (2014 & 2018) that find significant problems & deficiencies with the agency. There have been personnel issues that have resulted in significant litigation that has resulted in a large settlement. Also, the Federal government has sought the return of three million dollars that was improperly spent by said agency.

As currently configured OEM has not made the progress needed to protect the citizens, resources, and property of Oregonians. The proposed legislation is a well-reasoned and proper response to the past failings of OEM. The moving of OEM to a stand-alone agency goes far in setting up an agency for successfully protecting Oregon. We cannot wait any longer for the Oregon Military Department, which it now oversees OEM, to correct the list of serious deficiencies that have hobbled OEM since its inception.

My interest in this matter stems from the fact that I am a lecturer and have taught on the subjects of terrorism, risk management, measures of effectiveness, and disaster mitigation to both domestic and international security sector audiences since 2001.

Sincerely,

Matthew King
615 SE Walnut St.,
Hillsboro, Oregon 97123
mtigheking@gmail.com