



Date: 2/20/2019

To: Co-Chairs Winters and Piluso, members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety.

From: Dan Torres, Political Coordinator Oregon AFSCME.

Re: House Bill 5031, Budget for the Oregon Military Department

Oregon AFSCME represents roughly 27,000 Oregonians across the state that provided a number of public services including members at the Oregon Military Department and Office of Emergency Management. They help keep the Oregon National Guard prepared and equipped, provide a strong educational/personal development program for at-risk youth and work hard to make sure that all counties and their residents are prepared in the event of an emergency.

A recent Secretary of State audit found an increased need to support the Office of Emergency Management and we support all efforts towards providing more resources and support to them. It is crucial that this public safety function is given the tools they need to not only prepare for emergency and disasters but also the resources to help after an event. We are encouraged to see that OEM is stated as a top priority in the agency budget and support efforts being advanced to increase staff and resources to virtually every OEM program.

Likewise, we are encouraged to see overall increases to the Oregon Military Department Budget and continue to advocate for funding to support the work our members do outside of the OEM parts of OMD. We testified last biennium in support of continued efforts to clean and perform lead abatement of the armories. The progress on that is moving but there are a handful still undergoing the efforts. The hazardous conditions that were, and in some cases are, present at many armories provides a health risk for our members and potentially for the community.

Lastly we would like to speak in support of the Oregon Youth Challenge, a highly successful program for at-risk youth in Oregon. We supported previous efforts to expand the program and resources available for this important project and continue to support the efforts of this program, one that regularly exceeds it's Key Performance Measure.

Thank you allowing us to share our thoughts on this important budget that affects not only our members but many residents of Oregon. It is important we are supporting our public safety not only in messaging but with funding that provides the level of preparedness and readiness Oregon deserves.

Dan Torres
Oregon AFSCME