



September 2, 2008

The Honorable Peter Courtney, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Co-Chair  
State Legislative Emergency Board  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301-4048

**RE: Request for Funding of Oregon National Guard Wildfire Training and Preparedness For 2008 Fire Season**

Dear Co-Chairs:

**Nature of the Request**

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and the Oregon Military Department respectfully requests permission to appear before the Legislative Emergency Board on September 25, 2008 for the purpose of requesting 1) \$305,153 General Fund appropriation for wildfire training and certification of 327 Oregon National Guard soldiers and airmen for the Oregon Department of Forestry, and 2) \$605,185 Other Funds limitation in the Community Support Program to cover personal services and services and supplies costs incurred by the Oregon Military Department for the training and certification.

**Agency Action**

Based on fire season forecasts, devastating wildfires affecting California and portions of Washington State and the extreme drawdown of regular wildfire fighting crews, the Oregon Military Department, the Oregon Department of Forestry and the United States Forest Service partnered for the purpose of making sure the Oregon National Guard was prepared for quick action if called to assist in wildland fire suppression missions. Between July 27, 2008 and August 1, 2008, 327 Oregon National Guard soldiers and airmen received wildland fire suppression training at three locations within the State. The Oregon Department of Forestry, with additional partners organized and provided the training and certification and the Oregon Military Department provided personnel to be trained and support logistics for the week of training at Pendleton, Klamath Falls and Camp Rilea. Individuals who completed the week-long basic wildfire suppression training can maintain a currency of five years as a qualified Fire Fighter 2 (FFT-2). To maintain currency, each National Guard member would be required to take a one day annual firefighter refresher course consisting of safety and fire shelter use.

At the time the decision was made to implement the training of the National Guard, wildfires were burning in California and Washington, and contract crews normally used by the Oregon Department of Forestry had been drawn down to 11 twenty person crews. As those fires came under control contract crews were released and once again became available for Oregon. More recently, severe dry lightning storms hit Oregon August 15<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> igniting hundreds of fires across Oregon.

Both the Department of Forestry and the US Forest Service drew down the contract crew resources so heavily that only five contract crews were left in the system. At that point the agencies were able contain all active fires. However, if one additional large fire had occurred the Oregon Department of Forestry would have requested activation of the National Guard to provide wildfire fighting crews.

The Oregon Military Department has invoiced ODF for costs incurred of \$605,185 pursuant to the annual Operation Plan Smokey agreement between the two agencies. Of Military's \$605,185 costs, the Department has a signed agreement with the U.S. Forest Service for reimbursement of \$400,000 to help pay for these expenses. The Department of Forestry requests \$305,153 General Purpose Emergency Funds to pay the remainder of Military's costs and the Department of Forestry's costs (\$99,968) to provide training and certification (Attachment A).

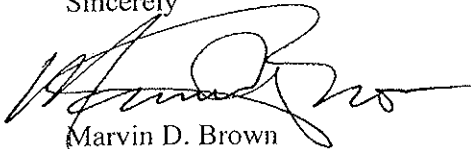
**Action Requested**

The Oregon Military Department requests that the Legislative Emergency Board increase Other Funds limitation in the Community Support Program by \$605,185. The Oregon Department of Forestry requests that the Legislative Emergency Board appropriate \$305,153 from General Purpose Emergency Funds for the cost of training National Guard soldiers and airmen for wildland fire suppression.

**Legislation Affected**

Section 2, Paragraph 3, Chapter 747, Oregon Laws 2007 (OMD Community Support Other Funds)  
Section 1, Paragraph 2, Chapter 754, Oregon Laws 2007 (General fund – Fire Protection)

Sincerely



Marvin D. Brown  
State Forester

Sincerely



Raymond F. Rees  
Major General  
The Adjutant General

- c: Mike Carrier, Governor's Natural Resource Policy Director  
Paul Evans, Governor's Policy Advisor, Emergency Preparedness, Military and Veterans' Affairs  
Oregon Board of Forestry  
ODF Executive Team  
Satish Upadhyay, Budget and Management Division  
Susan Jordan, Legislative Fiscal Office  
Kenneth Murphy, Director, Office of Emergency Management  
Travis Medema, Deputy Chief, Fire Protection Division  
Mark Hubbard, ODF Business Services Director

*Attachment A*

**Oregon Department of Forestry  
Oregon National Guard Wildfire Training  
Payment Plan  
9-2-08**

Oregon Military Department Invoice	\$605,185
U.S. Forest Service Reimbursement to ODF	<u>(\$400,000)</u>
ODF Military Department Costs	\$205,185
ODF Training Costs	<u>\$99,968</u>
<b>Total ODF General Purpose Emergency Funds Request</b>	<b>\$305,153</b>