

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 7, 2006

The Honorable R. David Paulison
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Federal Center Plaza
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Director Paulison:

We are writing about the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) role in the lengthy delay in reimbursing the Oregon National Guard for the expenses incurred in rendering assistance to Louisiana during Hurricane Katrina.

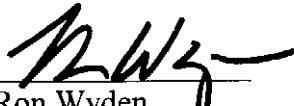
In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco asked Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski to send the Oregon National Guard to assist in the relief effort. The Oregon National Guard exceeded all expectations by deploying over 2,100 soldiers and their equipment 1,500 miles to New Orleans in less than 3 days. Their performance while deployed was superb and they have been recognized for the exceptional work they accomplished. Yet, over a year later, the Oregon National Guard has not been reimbursed for \$2.7 million the Guard expended in this relief effort.

Because the federal government did not initially react to the crisis in Louisiana, Oregon's Governor was forced to activate the Guard in state active duty status on September 1, 2005. Because of Oregon's minimum wage laws, Oregon state active duty pay exceeds the Department of Defense pay tables. Under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact these costs are the responsibility of the state that requested the assistance. However, because of the nature of the disaster and assistance provided, there appears to be much confusion regarding FEMA's role in reimbursing the Oregon National Guard.

For more than a year, the Oregon Military Department has continued to seek reimbursement from the State of Louisiana and FEMA for the \$2,727,800.92 expended. The Department is now facing a significant shortfall in their accounts because of this unresolved issue. Brig. Gen. Mike Caldwell of the Oregon Guard was recently quoted in an interview that if the money is not allocated by February, "We could be turning off lights and laying off people."

This issue has been unresolved for far too long and we ask that you resolve this matter expeditiously. Because of the timeliness of this matter and its effect on the budget of the Oregon National Guard, we request a response within 15 days.

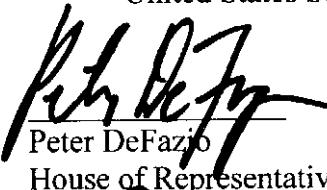
Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senate



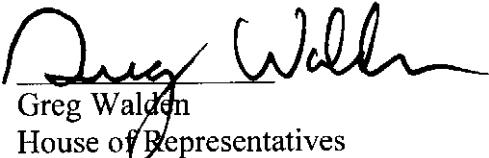
Gordon H. Smith
United States Senate



Peter DeFazio
House of Representatives



Earl Blumenauer
House of Representatives



Greg Walden
House of Representatives



Darlene Hooley
House of Representatives



David Wu
House of Representatives