



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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ZEV YAROSLAVSKY

SUPERVISOR, THIRD DISTRICT

July 18, 2008

Major General William H. Wade II
The Adjutant General, California National Guard
Joint Force Headquarters
9800 Goethe Road
Sacramento, CA 95827

Dear General Wade,

I am writing to request your assistance in resolving a critical situation which will severely impact vulnerable homeless persons this winter if left unresolved. My office has been informed that the West Los Angeles Armory (WLA Armory) may not be available this winter season from December 1st to March 15th to serve as a critically needed Winter Shelter for Westside homeless individuals.

Since 1994, the County and City of Los Angeles has provided funding to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to administer the County-wide Winter Shelter Program in collaboration with the California National Guard. The program makes key armories available under California Government Code Sections 15301-15301.6, Chapter 2, "Emergency Shelter Program."

On the Westside, the Winter Shelter Program is traditionally housed at the Culver City and WLA Armories and serves LA County Service Planning Area 5 (SPA 5). Historically, the Culver City Armory has been contracted at 150 beds and the West LA Armory at 160 beds for a total of 310 beds.

Last winter, a nightly average of 230 persons (which is approximately a 74% seasonal occupancy rate) was served in these beds. During the coldest and wettest nights of the season, the shelters combined to serve up to 335 persons per night. The loss of the WLA Armory leaves only the 150-bed facility in Culver City, which is insufficient to shelter the numbers of individuals seeking assistance during extreme winter weather.

The 2007 Homeless Count conducted by LAHSA indicates that there are approximately 6,703 homeless individuals in SPA 5, including approximately 37% chronically homeless persons and 18% homeless veterans. It is critical that the WLA Armory or a substitute armory be made available to provide shelter for homeless individuals to escape the deadly harsh winter conditions.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation with us to help ensure that the regional Emergency Shelter Program will retain its access to an adequate number of armories to shelter homeless persons this winter.

Sincerely,



ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Supervisor, Third District

cc: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
Senator Sheila Kuehl
Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas
Speaker of the Assembly Karen Bass
Assemblymember Mike Feuer
Assemblymember Julia Brownley

ZY: fgky