

September 15, 2008

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

Dear Major General Wade:

I am writing to respectfully and strongly request that you keep the West Los Angeles Armory open this winter from December 1, 2008 until March 15, 2009 for our Westside homeless population. It has come to my attention that it may not be available and, considering that an average of 230 people were served there each night last winter, it is clear to me that the need is there.

The Winter Shelter Program for West Los Angeles, traditionally housed at the Culver City and West LA Armories, serves LA County Service Planning Area 5 (SPA 5). In the past, the Culver City Armory has been contracted for 150 beds and the West LA Armory, 160 beds, for a total of 310 beds. The loss of the West LA Armory leaves only the Culver City location, and that is just not enough shelter for the desperate requirements of the community.

During the coldest nights of the season, we need to do better than that. According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA) Homeless Count, there are over 6700 homeless people in SPA 5, 18% of whom are homeless veterans. If you cannot find a way to keep the West LA Armory open, I urgently request that you identify a substitute armory as an alternate shelter. I look forward to your help before the winter is upon us. Thank you for your consideration of my thoughts on this and for helping us to identify options to deal with this crucial situation.

Sincerely,

SHEILA JAMES KUEHL
Senator, 23rd District