

By: Delisi

H.R. No. 427

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The citizens of Texas are extraordinarily fortunate
2 to have within the state an elite urban search and rescue (US&R)
3 organization, Texas Task Force One, which is prepared to assist in
4 times of disaster both at home and abroad; and

5 WHEREAS, One and a half years ago, Texas Task Force One was
6 among the groups that served heroically in the rescue and recovery
7 efforts at the site of the World Trade Center; the great heart and
8 expert proficiency exhibited by the Texas team in the face of that
9 horrific carnage earned them resounding praise, as well as the deep
10 gratitude of those for whom their efforts helped to bring a degree
11 of closure; in February 2003, another national tragedy, the breakup
12 of the shuttle Columbia, saw the task force mobilized again for the
13 task of recovering remains and debris; and

14 WHEREAS, Texas Task Force One was formed following the attack
15 on the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995; in 1996 the
16 Texas Engineering Extension Service, the primary agency
17 responsible for coordinating US&R in Texas, established an Urban
18 Search and Rescue Advisory Board, and Texas Task Force One
19 assembled for its first organizational meeting in 1997; and

20 WHEREAS, The Texas unit and 27 other such task forces around
21 the country form part of a national response system that was created
22 in 1989 by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); the
23 units, which must meet stringent training requirements, are
24 deployed by FEMA to assist in rescuing victims trapped in collapsed

1 buildings and mines, as well as to provide aid in other emergency
2 situations when the lives of a large number of people may be at
3 risk; and

4 WHEREAS, Each task force has a minimum of 62 members, all
5 volunteers, in order to be able to field two 31-person teams in
6 rotating, 12-hour shifts; rescue teams include such personnel as
7 structural engineers, trauma physicians, handlers for the group's
8 four rescue dogs, and specialists in heavy rigging, communications,
9 logistics, and hazardous materials; in addition, every member of
10 the group is a certified emergency medical technician; and

11 WHEREAS, The equipment cache maintained by each task force
12 enables it to set up a mobile emergency room, a camp, and a
13 communications center while also supporting the needs of the
14 engineers and construction personnel; moreover, each task force has
15 the means to be wholly self-sufficient for at least 72 hours; and

16 WHEREAS, Since its creation, Texas Task Force One has been
17 called out in the wake of such other disasters as the 1998 Del Rio
18 flood, 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse, 2000 Fort Worth tornado, 2001
19 Houston floods, and 2002 Central Texas floods and Hurricane Lili;
20 the unit was also sent to Salt Lake City in 2002 to help ensure the
21 safety of the Winter Olympics; and

22 WHEREAS, The highly skilled members of Texas Task Force One
23 undergo hundreds of hours of specialized training and make a
24 significant commitment to the unit in terms of time and
25 availability; in undertaking the arduous responsibilities of this
26 work, they also accept the great risks that it can entail; and

27 WHEREAS, Texas Task Force One deserves the profound gratitude

1 and respect of all Americans for its swift, sure, and courageous
2 response to large-scale disasters and for its continuing readiness
3 to meet the most challenging crises; now, therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 78th Texas
5 Legislature hereby honor the members of Texas Task Force One for
6 their exceptional dedication to the saving of life and extend to all
7 associated with this unit the state's deep and abiding appreciation
8 for their valor, selflessness, and tenacity in times of extreme and
9 urgent need.