

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 344

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

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

WHEREAS, Texas Task Force One was formed following the attack on the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in 1995; in 1996 the Texas Engineering Extension Service, the primary agency responsible for coordinating urban search and rescue in Texas, established an Urban Search and Rescue Advisory Board, and Texas Task Force One assembled for its first organizational meeting in 1997; and

WHEREAS, The Texas unit and 27 other such task forces around the country form part of a national response system that was created in 1989 by the Federal Emergency Management Agency; the units, which must meet stringent training requirements, are deployed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to assist in rescuing victims trapped in collapsed buildings and mines, as well as to provide aid in other emergency situations when the lives of a large number of people may be at risk; and

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

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

WHEREAS, Since its creation, Texas Task Force One has been called out in the wake of such other disasters as the 1998 Del Rio flood, 1999 Aggie Bonfire collapse, 2000 Fort Worth tornado, 2001

Houston floods, and 2002 Central Texas floods and Hurricane Lili; the unit was also sent to Salt Lake City in 2002 to help ensure the safety of the Winter Olympics; and

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

WHEREAS, Texas Task Force One deserves the profound gratitude and respect of all Americans for its swift, sure, and courageous response to large-scale disasters and for its continuing readiness to meet the most challenging crises; now, therefore, be it

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

Ogden

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on March 11, 2003.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate