

This week, the Mayor and members of the Portland City Council are hearing testimony and accepting comments as they consider Portland's current participation with the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). They are expected to vote next week with the options being no participation on the task force or full participation on the task force with the assignment of two Portland Police officers.

Members of the Citizens Crime Commission and the Portland Business Alliance are concerned. Both boards have examined this issue and taken a position supporting the City's full participation. Companies including Greenbrier, Northwest Natural, FLIR, and the Portland Trail Blazers, to name a few, have a vested interest in safety and security for their product distribution, their employees and the public they rely on. Acts of terrorism threaten that safety and threaten the foundation of a prosperous business climate. That is why they support collaborative law enforcement teams who share information on potential threats to community safety and leverage resources to respond to those threats.

In light of the recent terrorist attacks nationally and internationally, there is renewed urgency to align law enforcement efforts to protect the safety and security of our citizens and nation. According to Greg Bretzing, Special Agent in charge of the FBI in Oregon, local law enforcement officers are critical members of the multi-agency JTTF. The JTTF in every major city around the country is made up of local, state and federal law enforcement officers who receive specialized training and are part of daily briefings on global terrorism threats. They operate as an integrated team, focused on detecting, deterring, and investigating terrorism threats. Information is evaluated to determine whether there are any local threats that warrant investigation or intervention. The importance of local police to this collaboration cannot be overstated. More than 900 Portland police officers with close to 400,000 contacts with community members every year, know the community and the community values they are entrusted to protect and serve. Local officers bring that network of expertise and knowledge often not possessed by federal JTTF partners. The Portland Police Bureau is the only law enforcement agency of its size nationally not already a full member of the JTTF. This inhibits the exchange of information and unnecessarily places the safety of our community and other police officers at risk.

We recognize the important balance that exists in protecting the safety of the entire community while at the same time protecting the civil liberties of community members. We believe having PPB officers on the task force is the best way to ensure Portland values are represented and protected.

We urge members of the business community follow the lead of Crime Commission and Portland Business Alliance companies. Contact the Mayor and Portland City Council Members to state your support for full participation of Portland police officers in the Joint Terrorism Task Force. Your voice matters on this issue.



Bill Barr  
Chair, Citizens Crime Commission



Debbie Kitchin  
Chair, Portland Business Alliance

