

I am Colonel (Retired) Paul McAllister. I served for 26 years on active duty and full time in the Army National Guard. I am a qualified Military Intelligence Officer and Armor Officer. I graduated from Airborne, Air Assault and Ranger School. I am a proud graduate of Rio Grande University and US Army War College. For my last 10 years of service, I focused on Defense Support to Civil Authorities. I was the Deputy Operations Officer for the Ohio Army National Guard when we responded to Hurricane Katrina and Rita, where I was the lead planner and the lead for current operations for both of our deployments. Also during this time, I oversaw our planning for the response to the Avian Flu. Our focus was on the Strategic National Stockpile management, support to the TSA, and support to prisons. We thankfully never executed that planning, but it did inform our planning and execution of our response to H1N1. My next assignment was in the 73 Troop Command which became the first Homeland Response Force in the entire National Guard. I was first the Executive Officer and then the Deputy Commander. My focus was to man, equip, train and certify this organization to respond to any chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high explosive (CBRNE) events in FEMA Region V. My final position was the Joint Operations Officer for the Ohio National Guard. I was responsible for the planning and executing of all Defense Support to Civil Authorities in training, exercises, and real world deployments in the Ohio National Guard.

The reason I am here this morning is my concern over Senate Bill 311. In my experience during exercises and real world events, the ability to shelter in place or to evacuate an area that has been affected by a CBRNE event is critical. It is a matter of life and death for possibly hundreds of thousands of Ohio citizens. These types of events go beyond the bad actor type of events the Governor spoke about.

On July 11, 2012, 17 train cars derailed within the city limits of Columbus Ohio. They carried ethanol and caused a large fire. Imagine if that had been a deadly chemical and the plume that rose from the fire contaminated a large region of Columbus and its surrounding counties. The Governor and the Director of the Department of Health would have had to immediately issue shelter in place orders for the areas where it was not safe to go outside and evacuation orders for the areas that were in the path of the deadly plume. I believe this Bill would affect our ability to respond as a state.

What if there was a catastrophic event at Davis Bessie Nuclear Power Plant where radiation was leaked into the atmosphere? Once again, the Governor and the Director of the Department of Health would have to immediately issue shelter in place orders for the areas where it was not safe to go outside and evacuation orders for the areas that were in the path of the deadly plume.

There are multiple scenarios of either manmade or natural disasters that would require the Governor and Director of the Health to have to do immediate and long term orders in order to save lives, reduce human suffering, and to eventually restore our way of life. I believe that this Bill would be detrimental to our ability to respond any large scale CBRNE event in the state of Ohio.