

March 15th Guard Home Action

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MEDIA ADVISORY

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For Immediate Release

Event: Across Oregon, peace and social justice groups mobilize to mark 6th anniversary of Iraq war and push state legislators to keep Guard home.

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Date: Sunday, March 15th, 2009

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: Steps of the State Capitol & Capitol Mall, downtown Salem, Oregon.

Across Oregon, peace and social justice groups mobilize to mark 6th anniversary of Iraq war and push state legislators to keep Guard home.

Dozens of peace and social justice organizations across the state are gearing up for a big action in Salem this March to call for an end to the US war in Iraq and to urge Oregon State legislators to stop the Spring deployment of the National Guard to Iraq and Afghanistan. "This will be a great opportunity to show both the Obama administration and the Legislature that lots of Oregonians still want peace and are willing to work for it," said Peter Bergel, Director of *Oregon PeaceWorks*, one of the many organizations co-sponsoring the March 15th action at the state Capitol.

The action is scheduled to take place on Sunday, March 15th, at 1:00 PM, with a rally at the steps of the Capitol, followed by a march through downtown Salem. The timing corresponds with the *Rural Organizing Project's* Annual Rural Caucus & Strategy Session which is held March 15th and 16th in Salem. The ROP gathering includes a statewide strategic planning session on Sunday, March 15th, taking place before and continuing after the peace march and rally, and a legislative visit day on Monday, the 16th, with the goal of informing legislators of Oregon's priorities for the 2009 legislature.

"Sending half the Oregon guard to Iraq is a big hardship for them and for Oregon," said Curt Bell, a member of the *PDX Peace Coalition*, another co-sponsor for the March 15th peace rally. "Some of them might not come back and they are needed here at home." Bell emphasized that the United States should be bringing troops home from

Iraq, not sending more. "The authorization to send the Oregon Guard to Iraq and Afghanistan this spring is not constitutionally valid and our state legislature needs to step up and say no to deployment."

"We face severe economic dislocations in the coming months, with millions losing their jobs, their health insurance and their homes," said William Seaman, a volunteer with *Portland Peaceful Response Coalition*, "Our continued presence in Iraq and Afghanistan is the problem, not the solution to the ongoing violence there, and the astronomical spending on these wars and occupations would bring greater security worldwide if it were directed to creating jobs, rebuilding our collapsing infrastructure, and helping to put the country's economy back on track."

Many of the organizers for the March 15th action believe the Obama Administration will continue to face Republican opposition to his plan to end the US war in Iraq unless pressure from the public continues and grows. "It is naïve to think that Obama's Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, a holdover from the Bush Administration, can be trusted to shut down a war that he's supported for the past six years," said Seaman. "We need to make sure our state representatives act now to stop the Oregon Guard deployment this spring, and we need to continue and up the pressure to bring all the troops home, prevent the escalation of the US presence in Afghanistan, and finally bring an end to these criminal wars."

Co-sponsors and endorsers for the March 15th action in Salem include *Peace & Justice Works Iraq Affinity Group* (503-236-3065), *Portland Peaceful Response Coalition* (www.pprc-news.org), *East Timor Action Network/Portland*, *War Resisters League-Portland* (503-238-0605), *PDX Peace Coalition* (www.pdxpeace.org), *Metanoia Peace Community-United Methodist Church*, *Rural Organizing Project*, *Oregon Wildlife Federation*, *Peace Justice and Environment Committee of the Portland Mennonite Church*, *Progressive Responses--a program of Community Alliance of Lane County (CALC)*, *Oregon PeaceWorks* (503-585-2767-Salem), *Families for Peace*, *Veterans for Peace Chapter 132 (Corvallis)*, *American Friends Service Committee, Portland Alliance (media cosponsor)*, *Alliance for Democracy - Portland Chapter*, *Portland Solidarity* (portlandsolidarity@post.com), *Silverton People for Peace*, *Veterans for Peace Chapter 72 (Portland)*, *Americans United for Palestinian Human Rights* (www.auphr.org), *Veterans for Peace Chapter 141 (Bandon)*, *Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility*, *Yamhill Valley Peacemakers*, *Willamette Reds*, *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom-Portland Chapter*, *KBOO Community Radio 90.7FM Portland, 100.7 Corvallis, 91.9FM Hood River* (www.kboo.fm), *Love Makes a Family Inc*, *Code Pink Portland*, *Tikkun Olam committee of P'nai Or*, *Women in Black*, *Rogue Valley Veterans for Peace Chapter 156 (Grants Pass)*, *West Hills Friends Church*, *Freedom Socialist Party* (503-240-4662), *Stand for Peace (Cottage*

Grove), Central Oregon Peace Network (Bend), Institute for Peace and Justice at Linn Benton Community College, Oregon Green Energy Coalition, Radical Women, Portland Jobs with Justice, and others.

For more information, please call Peace & Justice Works at 503-236-3065.

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