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**SENATE BILL 5181**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Pearson, Hasegawa, Roach, Hobbs, Dammeier, Liias, Chase, and Mullet

AN ACT Relating to the scope of state fire service mobilization and ensuring compliance with existing state and federal disaster response policies; amending RCW 43.43.960 and 43.43.961; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature recognizes the vital role that our state's fire service personnel play in responding not just to fires but to disasters of varying types and kinds. The legislature further recognizes that the fire service mobilization plan has always been intended to be utilized not just in wild land fire incidents, but in all emergencies and disasters to which fire departments, fire districts, and regional fire protection authorities typically respond. Accordingly, it is the intent of the legislature to clarify that state fire service mobilization be allowed in all incidents to which fire departments, fire districts, and regional fire protection authorities typically respond, so long as the mobilization meets the requirements identified in the Washington state fire service mobilization plan.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.43.960 and 2003 c 405 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this subchapter.

(1) "Chief" means the chief of the Washington state patrol.

(2) "State fire marshal" means the director of fire protection in the Washington state patrol.

(3) "Fire chief" includes the chief officer of a statutorily authorized fire agency, or the fire chief's authorized representative. Also included are the department of natural resources fire control chief, and the department of natural resources regional managers.

(4) "Jurisdiction" means state, county, city, fire district, regional fire protection authority, or port district ((~~firefighting~~)) units, or other units covered by this chapter.

(5) "Mobilization" means that ((~~firefighting~~)) all risk resources regularly provided by fire departments, fire districts, and regional fire protection authorities beyond those available through existing agreements will be requested and, when available, sent in response to an emergency or disaster situation that has exceeded the capabilities of available local resources. During a large scale emergency, mobilization includes the redistribution of regional or statewide ((~~firefighting~~)) risk resources to either direct emergency incident assignments or to assignment in communities where ((~~firefighting~~)) resources are needed.

When mobilization is declared and authorized as provided in this chapter, all ((~~firefighting~~)) risk resources regularly provided by fire departments, fire districts, and regional fire protection authorities including those of the host fire protection authorities, i.e. incident jurisdiction, shall be deemed as mobilized under this chapter, including those that responded earlier under existing mutual aid or other agreement. All nonhost fire protection authorities providing ((~~firefighting~~)) resources in response to a mobilization declaration shall be eligible for expense reimbursement as provided by this chapter from the time of the mobilization declaration.

This chapter shall not reduce or suspend the authority or responsibility of the department of natural resources under chapter 76.04 RCW.

(6) "Mutual aid" means emergency interagency assistance provided without compensation under an agreement between jurisdictions under chapter 39.34 RCW.

(7) "All risk resources" means those resources regularly provided by fire departments, fire districts, and regional fire protection authorities required to respond to incidents, including but not limited to:

(a) Wild land fires;

(b) Landslides;

(c) Earthquakes;

(d) Floods; and

(e) Contagious diseases.

**Sec.**  RCW 43.43.961 and 2003 c 405 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

Because of the possibility of the occurrence of disastrous fires or other disasters of unprecedented size and destructiveness, the need to insure that the state is adequately prepared to respond to such a fire or disaster, the need to establish a mechanism and a procedure to provide for reimbursement to state agencies and local ((~~firefighting~~)) agencies that respond to help others in time of need or to a host fire district that experiences expenses beyond the resources of the fire district, and generally to protect the public peace, health, safety, lives, and property of the people of Washington, it is hereby declared necessary to:

(1) Provide the policy and organizational structure for large scale mobilization of ((~~firefighting~~)) all risk resources in the state through creation of the Washington state fire services mobilization plan;

(2) Confer upon the chief the powers provided herein;

(3) Provide a means for reimbursement to state agencies and local fire jurisdictions that incur expenses when mobilized by the chief under the Washington state fire services mobilization plan; and

(4) Provide for reimbursement of the host fire department or fire protection district when it has: (a) Exhausted all of its resources; and (b) invoked its local mutual aid network and exhausted those resources. Upon implementation of state fire mobilization, the host district resources shall become state fire mobilization resources consistent with the fire mobilization plan.

It is the intent of the legislature that mutual aid and other interlocal agreements providing for enhanced emergency response be encouraged as essential to the public peace, safety, health, and welfare, and for the protection of the lives and property of the people of the state of Washington. If possible, mutual aid agreements should be without stated limitations as to resources available, time, or area. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed or interpreted to limit the eligibility of any nonhost fire protection authority for reimbursement of expenses incurred in providing ((~~firefighting~~)) all risk resources for mobilization provided that the mobilization must meet the requirements identified in the Washington state fire service mobilization plan.

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