

SENATE RESOLUTION
8634

By Senators Haugen, Swecker, King, Sheldon, Kauffman, Becker, Ranker, Marr, Jarrett, Berkey, Delvin, Eide, Kilmer, Kastama, Brandland, Fraser, Hatfield, Fairley, Franklin, McAuliffe, Parlette, Regala, Roach, Shin, and Kohl-Welles

WHEREAS, The Washington state patrol is primarily responsible for traffic law enforcement, collision investigation, and motorist assistance on seventeen thousand five hundred twenty-four miles of state and interstate highways in Washington state; and

WHEREAS, The department of transportation, created in 1977, is the single statewide agency responsible for maintaining our state's transportation system; and

WHEREAS, In the first three days of December 2007, western Washington experienced a series of three storms, starting with snow and ending with record or near-record twenty-four hour precipitation totals; and

WHEREAS, Major flooding occurred in Washington, with about ten sites reaching all-time record high flood stage levels; and

WHEREAS, President Bush made a federal disaster declaration for Grays Harbor, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Thurston counties; and

WHEREAS, When floodwaters peaked in December 2007, nearly sixty separate locations on roads in southwest Washington were closed due to mud slides, standing water, and downed trees and power lines, including twenty miles of Interstate 5 near Chehalis, which was closed for four days; and

WHEREAS, After the floodwaters peaked, the department of transportation reduced the number of road closures in southwest Washington by two-thirds within about twenty-four hours; and

WHEREAS, The Washington state patrol worked three thousand four hundred sixty-nine regular time hours and one thousand two hundred forty-six overtime hours to assist residents during the floods; and

WHEREAS, Starting December 12, 2008, through early January 2009, record snow levels fell in virtually every part of Washington and many areas experienced record low temperatures; and

WHEREAS, During the 2008-2009 snow event, the department of transportation placed about forty-four thousand tons of liquid and solid deicers and thirty-two thousand tons of sand on state routes throughout Washington; and

WHEREAS, The department of transportation sent ten operators and five plow trucks from the Olympic region to the Eastern region to assist Spokane county, for which December 2008 is the snowiest month on record; and

WHEREAS, The Washington state patrol worked eight thousand three hundred nineteen regular time hours and two thousand four hundred nineteen overtime hours to assist motorists during the snowstorms; and

WHEREAS, High precipitation totals, with the highest on January 7, 2009, occurring in Mason, Grays Harbor, and Thurston counties, followed the snow in the first week of January 2009, which combined with melting snow to cause significant flooding, avalanches, rock falls, and mud slides around the state, including multiple mud slides in Skagit county; and

WHEREAS, Streamflow in both western and eastern Washington was high, and on January 9, 2009, six rivers in Washington had record or near-record crest levels, including the Stillaguamish river, which flooded Stanwood; and

WHEREAS, In early January 2009, one hundred thirty-nine state highway segments were closed for some period of time while other areas, including Interstate 5 near Fife, had lane restrictions; and Interstate 5 between Centralia and Chehalis, all three major passes, and all state routes through southwest Washington were closed at the same time, effectively isolating the Puget Sound basin; and

WHEREAS, The Washington state patrol rescued motorists stranded by the floods, performed aerial surveys to assist the department of transportation, and worked three thousand ten regular time hours and one thousand thirteen overtime hours during the holiday season; and

WHEREAS, The department of transportation responded to the storms with over one thousand two hundred fifty employees working around the clock during the holiday season, compiling one hundred fifteen thousand hours of regular time and forty-eight thousand hours of overtime; and

WHEREAS, The department of transportation communicated with the freight community through a list serve to minimize the impact on the movement of goods; and

WHEREAS, The department of transportation went to extraordinary efforts to communicate with the public through traffic cameras, variable message signs, highway advisory radio, the world wide web, and telephone; and

WHEREAS, After the peak of the January 2009 flooding, the department of transportation reopened the majority of the closures in southwest Washington in less than two days;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize and commend the employees of the Washington state department of transportation on their work to maintain our state's transportation corridors during and after the storms of 2007, 2008, and 2009, and the employees of the Washington state patrol on their efforts to assist our residents during the storms of 2007, 2008, and 2009; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to Paula Hammond, Secretary of the Washington State Department of Transportation, and to Chief John R. Batiste, Chief of the Washington State Patrol.

I, Thomas Hoemann, Secretary of the Senate,
do hereby certify that this is a true and
correct copy of Senate Resolution 8634,
adopted by the Senate
February 20, 2009

THOMAS HOEMANN
Secretary of the Senate