

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1019

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Public Safety

**Title:** An act relating to state fire services mobilization.

**Brief Description:** Concerning state fire services mobilization.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Dent, Goodman, Griffey, Blake, Dye, Short, Haler, Tharinger, Shea and Chandler.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Public Safety: 1/19/17, 1/26/17 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Expands the definition of "mobilization" of state fire resources to allow mobilization in preparation for disasters and emergencies that are predicted to exceed local resources.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Pellicciotti, Vice Chair; Klippert, Ranking Minority Member; Hayes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chapman, Griffey, Holy, Orwall, Pettigrew and Van Werven.

**Staff:** Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

**Background:**

The Chief of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) has the authority to mobilize jurisdictions under the Washington State Fire Services Mobilization Plan. A mobilization is warranted when a local disaster necessitates resources beyond those available through existing agreements. During a large-scale emergency, mobilization includes the redistribution of regional or statewide firefighting resources to either direct emergency incident assignments or to assignments in communities where firefighting resources are needed.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

From the time a state mobilization is declared, all fire protection authorities providing resources in response to the mobilization declaration are eligible for expense reimbursement. State and local agencies that participate in a mobilization generally receive reimbursement through the state's Disaster Response Account.

In 2015 the Legislature expanded "mobilization" beyond general firefighting to include all risk resources regularly provided by fire departments, districts, and regional fire protection authorities. "All risk resources" include those resources regularly provided by fire departments, fire districts, and regional fire protection authorities in response to natural or man-made incidents, including but not limited to wildland fires, landslides, earthquakes, floods, and contagious diseases. The Chief of the WSP must report annually regarding each emergency or disaster in which the Washington State Fire Service Mobilization Plan was used for purposes other than fire suppression. The expanded scope of state fire services mobilization expires in 2019.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The definition of "mobilization" of state fire resources is expanded. In addition to mobilization in response to a disaster that has exceeded local resources, mobilization may be in preparation for a disaster that is predicted to exceed local resources.

The Chief of the WSP must report annually regarding each emergency or disaster for which resources were prepositioned in anticipation of the incident exceeding local capabilities. Additionally, the Chief of the WSP must update the Washington State Fire Services Mobilization Plan to account for the authorization to send resources in preparation of emergencies or disasters that are predicted to exceed local resources.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The provisions of the original bill are retained. In addition, the Chief of the WSP must report annually on incidents in which fire resources were prepositioned in anticipation of a disaster or emergency that was predicted to exceed local resources, and must update the Washington State Fire Service Mobilization Plan to reflect the authorization to preposition resources under the plan.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for section 1, relating to authorizing mobilization in anticipation of an emergency or disaster expected to exceed local resources, which takes

effect immediately, and section 2 which, because of a prior delayed effective date, takes effect July 1, 2019.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This bill would allow mobilization to include the repositioning of assets when an incident is predicted to exceed the resources that are already available. If assets are in position, suppression efforts will be more successful. This will prevent natural resources from burning and keep fires at a manageable level.

This is an efficient and cost effective use of resources. Each summer, lightning and other fire conditions occur. The mobilization plan provides for mobilization of resources in anticipation of a request but the statute does not. There is enough experience with mobilization to know when conditions are occurring that will necessitate resources, but currently a mobilization cannot happen until local capability has been exceeded. Previous experience with repositioning demonstrates that the possibility to mobilize resources enhances the possibility to reduce cost.

When the mobilization law was expanded to all risk resource mobilization, it was also set to expire in 2019, so if this is an extreme cost it will repeal automatically. The bill should include a provision to require the State Fire Marshal and Fire Defense Committee to incorporate the change in its annual update to the state plan.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) There is concern about the impact on the mobilization budget. It is hard to know the exact cost of repositioning, which will involve mobilizing resources like personnel, equipment, strike teams, and engines. The resources will likely be relocated from western Washington to eastern Washington in order to shorten response time.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Dent, prime sponsor; Steve North, Black Lake Fire Department; Michael White, Washington State Council of Firefighters; and Loren Torgerson, Department of Natural Resources.

(Other) Monica Alexander and Charles LeBlanc, Washington State Patrol.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.