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**SENATE BILL 5937**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2022 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Sefzik, Muzzall, and Schoesler

AN ACT Relating to providing financial assistance to aid impacted communities in the recovery from floods occurring November 2021 through January 2022; amending RCW 38.52.105; creating a new section; making appropriations; and declaring an emergency.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that many areas of the state were significantly impacted by the combined snow and rain events of November 2021 and January 2022. During this period, the state experienced the severe impact of atmospheric river events that followed a significant accumulation of mountain snow conditions, combining to cause historic flooding. The legislature further finds that many communities were shut off from services and livelihoods, and homes, businesses, and public infrastructure were damaged. The legislature further finds that the severity of flooding and other weather-related events of November 2021 have been declared a major disaster area by the president of the United States and the flooding from both the November 2021 and January 2022 events have caused an emergency proclamation by the governor. The legislature finds that it is in the interest of the state to assist the impacted communities to recover as soon as possible, for the peace and prosperity of all.

(2) The legislature intends to assist local governments and other political subdivisions of the state, businesses, and residents within impacted counties, by providing funding to recover from recent flooding events. As part of this support, the legislature intends to provide state funds to cover any matching requirements that may be necessary from federal emergency management agency grant opportunities.

**Sec.**  RCW 38.52.105 and 2021 c 334 s 963 are each amended to read as follows:

The disaster response account is created in the state treasury. Moneys may be placed in the account from legislative appropriations and transfers, federal appropriations, or any other lawful source. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation. Expenditures from the account may be used only for support of state agency and local government disaster response and recovery efforts, including response by state and local government and federally recognized tribes to the novel coronavirus pursuant to the gubernatorial declaration of emergency of February 29, 2020, and to reimburse the workers' compensation funds and self-insured employers under RCW 51.16.220. During the 2019-2021 and 2021-2023 fiscal biennia, expenditures from the disaster response account may be used for military department operations and to support wildland fire suppression preparedness, prevention, and restoration activities by state agencies and local governments. During the 2017-2019 and 2019-2021 fiscal biennia, the legislature may direct the treasurer to make transfers of moneys in the disaster response account to the state general fund. During the 2021-2023 biennium, expenditures from the disaster response account may be used to support the recovery activities from damage caused by natural disasters in November 2021 and January 2022 in jurisdictions as identified in presidential or gubernatorial declarations. The account may also be used to cover any match required from federal granting programs of local government and individuals. It is the intent of the legislature that these policies will be continued in subsequent fiscal biennia.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The sum of $85,000,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, from the general fund to the disaster response account for the purposes specified in section 4 of this act.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The sum of $85,000,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal biennium ending June 30, 2023, from the disaster response account to the military department for the sole purpose of providing disaster response and recovery assistance to political subdivisions of the state, tribes, businesses, and residents that have suffered adverse impacts from natural disasters in November 2021 and January 2022 in jurisdictions as identified in presidential or gubernatorial declarations. Disaster response and recovery assistance includes, but is not limited to, financial assistance for the following activities:

(a) Temporary housing, shelter, and cash assistance;

(b) Costs to repair or replace damaged buildings, structures, and public infrastructure;

(c) Demolition costs for homes, buildings, structures, and public infrastructure that are beyond repair;

(d) Loss of personal property;

(e) Medical expenses; and

(f) Covering 100 percent of the cost of any financial match or contribution requirements that may be necessary to receive federal or state disaster relief assistance.

(2) Any moneys unobligated or not expended in subsection (1) of this section by June 30, 2023, are reappropriated for the 2023-2025 fiscal biennium for the same purposes as specified in subsection (1) of this section.

(3) In no event may the total amount appropriated in this section exceed $85,000,000.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately.

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