

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1147

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Community & Economic Development

**Title:** An act relating to creating the Washington state office of resiliency.

**Brief Description:** Creating the Washington state office of resiliency.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Ryu, Klippert, Pollet, Goodman and Rule.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Community & Economic Development: 2/2/21, 2/10/21 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires the Governor to develop and administer a statewide Disaster Resiliency Program (Program).
- Appropriates \$500,000 to the Office of the Governor for the purposes of developing and administering the Program.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Paul, Vice Chair; Boehnke, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Frame, Johnson, J., Kraft, Lovick, Rule and Taylor.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Jacobsen and Sutherland.

**Staff:** Cassie Jones (786-7303).

**Background:**

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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 part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

In 2019 the Legislature created the Washington Disaster Resiliency Work Group (Work Group) and directed it to study and make recommendations on natural disaster and resiliency activities. The Work Group was required to review disaster mitigation and resiliency activities being conducted in Washington, other states, and the federal government, including how those activities are funded. The Work Group was also required to make recommendations to the Legislature and the Office of the Insurance Commissioner regarding whether the state should create an ongoing disaster resiliency program. On November 30, 2020, the Work Group issued its final report which included a recommendation to create an ongoing resiliency program and a description of the activities and coordination in which the program should engage.

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### **Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The Governor is required to develop and administer a Statewide Disaster Resiliency Program (Program). The Program may be developed in conjunction with a climate resiliency program. The Program must include:

- methods for ensuring ongoing coordination of state and local resiliency and response activities, including:
  - developing, administering, tracking, and communicating progress of overall disaster resiliency efforts;
  - coordinating funding to maximize federal, state, local, and private investments;
  - serving as a public and private resiliency resource center; and
  - enhancing interagency collaboration, education, and outreach programs;
- a strategy for addressing the impacts of natural disasters, including flooding, on communities and ecosystems, including:
  - developing, coordinating, and communicating resiliency initiatives and projects across state agencies and local governments;
  - conducting policy research and recommendations related to enhancing resiliency;
  - coordinating research, data collection, and analysis; and
  - researching economic tools to address resiliency; and
- support functions to agencies, departments, tribes, and other stakeholders to develop natural climate resiliency solutions that improve the resiliency of the state's waters, forests, and other vital ecosystems to the impacts of climate change, and increase their carbon pollution reduction capacity through sequestration, storage, and overall ecosystem integrity. Qualifying programs, activities, and projects are listed. For these projects, priority must be given to projects that implement community-scale hazard mitigation activities that use nature-based solutions.

"Resiliency" means the ability to prepare, mitigate, plan for, withstand, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events and changing conditions, and reorganize in an equitable manner that results in a new and better condition.

The sum of \$250,000, or as much as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, and \$250,000, or as much as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, from the State General Fund to the Office of the Governor for the purposes of developing and administering the Program.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute bill makes the following changes to the original bill:

- eliminates all provisions relating to the creation of the Office of Resiliency (Office) within the Office of the Governor, including:
  - creation of the Office and management structure;
  - designation of the duties of the Office;
  - authority for the Office to accept gifts, grants, or endowments;
  - creation of the Office of Resiliency Advisory Board; and
  - creation of an account;
- adds a provision requiring the Governor to develop and administer a Statewide Disaster Resiliency Program (Program);
- requires the Program to include:
  - methods for ensuring ongoing coordination of state and local resiliency responses and activities, with a specified list of methods;
  - a strategy for addressing the impacts of natural disasters, including flooding, on communities and ecosystems, with a specified list of strategies; and
  - support functions to agencies, departments, tribes, and other stakeholders to develop natural climate resiliency solutions that improve the resiliency of the state's waters, forests, and other vital ecosystems to the impacts of climate change and prioritizing projects that implement community-scale hazard mitigation activities that use nature-based solutions, with a specified list of programs, activities, and projects; and
- appropriates \$500,000 from the State General Fund to the Office of the Governor for purposes of the act.

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**Appropriation:** The sum of \$250,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, and \$250,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, is provided to the Office of the Governor.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) If we can prevent or mitigate the incidences and size of disasters, it is in the interests of the rate payers who bear the cost of increased rates and it is in the interest of

government. For every dollar that we invest in planning, we get \$6 back in savings. The resiliency work group was formed in 2019. It consisted of a wide range of stakeholders and was chaired by the state Insurance Commissioner. The work group worked for about 18 months and determined that data, coordination, and funding are the primary needs for increasing resilience. Resiliency is a public and private endeavor. Developing a more resilient Washington is an investment. It will also help the insurance market and will help us be more prepared for the next disaster.

The threat of flood related disasters is real and is increasing in Washington. The cost of flooding in Washington exceeds all other natural hazards. The state has taken action to prevent future flooding, but the state can do more. This bill is a true reflection of the disaster work group's recommendations. A state leader with a singular focus on resiliency can craft a strategy to mitigate flood risks and other hazards, assess infrastructure vulnerabilities, and examine key drivers of increased risk. A centralized office could ensure cost effective and equitable planning and recovery across the state. The data is clear that natural hazards are a substantial risk to community, economy, health, and natural resources. Current capital budget resiliency investments in flood risk reduction are nascent. As we experience the effects of climate change, an integrated approach to resilience must be the norm. This will help save communities and public dollars in the long run. Addressing resiliency can be a meaningful tool in addressing racial equity issues.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Resilience is at the heart of equitable policy. Often the most vulnerable are at the least resilient situations. The Governor's priority policy includes addressing resiliency; that work is similar to the planning and statewide coordination of a resiliency strategy contemplated in House Bill 1147. Resiliency is built in the Governor's strategies across multiple policy areas.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Ryu, prime sponsor; David Forte, Office of the Insurance Commissioner; Zach Bartscherer, The Pew Charitable Trusts; and Scott Richards, The Nature Conservancy.

(Other) Michael Furze, Department of Commerce.

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