
HOUSE BILL 1620

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Representatives Leavitt, Boehnke, Shewmake, Ryu, Robertson, Wicks, Duerr, Ramel, Valdez, Bronoske, Callan, Ramos, Rule, Santos, Simmons, Pollet, Hackney, and Taylor

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1 AN ACT Relating to responding to extreme weather events; amending
2 RCW 38.52.105; adding a new section to chapter 38.52 RCW; and
3 creating new sections.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** This act may be known and cited as the
6 extreme weather protection act.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The legislature finds that cold storm
8 patterns in the winter months, dangerous heat waves in the summer,
9 and other major weather events present severe public health
10 challenges for individuals and families in Washington.

11 (2) Moreover, the legislature finds that these challenges are not
12 experienced equally across the population. The elderly, people with
13 disabilities, people with low incomes, farmworkers, people
14 experiencing homelessness, and people who historically were zoned to
15 areas that faced increased environmental impacts during weather
16 events are the most at risk for losing their life or being severely
17 impacted by weather-related ailments.

18 (3) The legislature finds that during the record heatwave of
19 2021, the deadliest weather-related disaster in Washington on record,
20 over 100 people in Washington and nearly 800 people in the northwest

1 region lost their lives as a result of inability to access cooling
2 centers or resources and hundreds more visited emergency rooms with
3 heat-related illnesses.

4 (4) The legislature acknowledges that according to scientists at
5 the Pacific Northwest national laboratory, it is predicted that these
6 severe weather events will happen more frequently because of the
7 changing climate.

8 (5) The legislature finds that the cost to local governments to
9 provide heating and cooling centers are sometimes insurmountable and
10 intends to provide supplemental resources to local jurisdictions and
11 tribal partners where local resources are not available during
12 extreme weather events.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 38.52
14 RCW to read as follows:

15 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
16 specific purpose, the department shall develop and implement an
17 extreme weather response grant program for the purpose of assisting
18 political subdivisions and federally recognized tribes with the costs
19 of responding to community needs during periods of extremely hot or
20 cold weather. The department may adopt rules to administer the
21 extreme weather response grant program.

22 (2) The department may award grants to political subdivisions and
23 federally recognized tribes for reimbursement of costs in accordance
24 with subsection (3) of this section if the costs were incurred by
25 communities that have demonstrated a lack of local resources to
26 address community needs and were incurred for the benefit of socially
27 vulnerable populations. Social vulnerability refers to the resilience
28 of communities when confronted by external stresses on human health,
29 such as natural or human-caused disasters. Socially vulnerable
30 populations include, but are not limited to, individuals with
31 disabilities, individuals without vehicles, older adults, individuals
32 with low incomes or experiencing homelessness, and individuals with
33 limited English proficiency.

34 (3) The costs associated with the following activities are
35 eligible for reimbursement under the extreme weather response grant
36 program:

37 (a) Establishing and operating warming and cooling centers,
38 including rental of equipment, purchase of supplies and water,
39 staffing, and other associated costs;

- 1 (b) Transporting individuals to warming and cooling centers;
2 (c) Purchasing fans or other supplies needed for cooling of
3 congregate living settings;
4 (d) Providing emergency temporary housing such as rental of a
5 hotel or convention center; and
6 (e) Other related activities necessary for life safety during a
7 period of extremely hot or cold weather as determined by the
8 department.

9 (4) The department shall, upon request, provide information to
10 political subdivisions and federally recognized tribes regarding the
11 establishment and operation of warming and cooling centers.

12 (5) Grant funding awarded under this section must be used to
13 supplement, not supplant, other federal, state, and local funding for
14 emergency response.

15 (6) For purposes of this section, "political subdivision" means
16 any county, city, or town that has established a local organization
17 for emergency management or any joint local organization for
18 emergency management established pursuant to RCW 38.52.070.

19 **Sec. 4.** RCW 38.52.105 and 2021 c 334 s 963 are each amended to
20 read as follows:

21 The disaster response account is created in the state treasury.
22 Moneys may be placed in the account from legislative appropriations
23 and transfers, federal appropriations, or any other lawful source.
24 Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation.
25 Expenditures from the account may be used only for support of state
26 agency and local government disaster response and recovery efforts,
27 including the awarding of grants under section 3 of this act,
28 response by state and local government and federally recognized
29 tribes to the novel coronavirus pursuant to the gubernatorial
30 declaration of emergency of February 29, 2020, and to reimburse the
31 workers' compensation funds and self-insured employers under RCW
32 51.16.220. During the 2019-2021 and 2021-2023 fiscal biennia,
33 expenditures from the disaster response account may be used for
34 military department operations and to support wildland fire
35 suppression preparedness, prevention, and restoration activities by
36 state agencies and local governments. During the 2017-2019 and
37 2019-2021 fiscal biennia, the legislature may direct the treasurer to
38 make transfers of moneys in the disaster response account to the

1 state general fund. It is the intent of the legislature that these
2 policies will be continued in subsequent fiscal biennia.

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