

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2273

As Reported by House Committee On:

Innovation, Community & Economic Development, & Veterans

Title: An act relating to conducting a study of functional recovery building code standards.

Brief Description: Conducting a study of functional recovery building code standards.

Sponsors: Representatives Donaghy, Ryu, Ramel and Timmons.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Innovation, Community & Economic Development, & Veterans: 1/16/24, 1/19/24 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Military Department to conduct a study regarding statewide building code and construction standards pertaining to earthquake and tsunami resilience.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, & VETERANS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Donaghy, Vice Chair; Rule, Vice Chair; Volz, Ranking Minority Member; Barnard, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Chambers, Christian, Cortes, Paul, Senn, Shavers, Street, Waters and Wilcox.

Staff: Emily Poole (786-7106).

Background:

The Military Department (Department), under the direction of the state's Adjutant General,

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is responsible for administering a comprehensive, all-hazard emergency management program for the state. Each political subdivision of the state must establish or jointly create a local organization for carrying out emergency management functions in accordance with the Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

The State Building Code Council (Council) is a state agency responsible for the adoption of the State Building Code (Code). The Code establishes minimum performance standards and requirements for construction and construction materials in the state consistent with accepted standards of engineering, fire, and life safety.

The concept of functional recovery generally relates to the ability of buildings and infrastructure systems to quickly return to function or service directly following an earthquake.

Summary of Bill:

The Department must conduct a study regarding statewide building code and construction standards pertaining to earthquake and tsunami resilience as well as recommendations for functional recovery of buildings and critical infrastructure directly following an earthquake.

The study must include an assessment of the following:

- functional recovery building code standards that are being developed at the federal level, in other jurisdictions, or by organizations with expertise in earthquake performance standards;
- the levels of functional recovery supported by state and local building and construction codes;
- the objectives, feasibility, necessary measures, and estimated costs of adopting various models of statewide functional recovery building code standards;
- how statewide standards for functional recovery would fit into an "all hazards" approach for state emergency response;
- funding opportunities that provide for the coordination of state and federal funds; and
- equity considerations for the development of statewide building code standards for functional recovery.

In conducting the study, the Department must request input from the Council and representatives of appropriate public and private sector entities.

The Department must submit a preliminary report on the outcomes of the completed study to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2025, and a final report must be submitted by May 1, 2026.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Washington is particularly prone to earthquakes, which could cause significant damage and disruption. When a major earthquake occurs, it is important to have places that are usable for the recovery process. Most buildings are not designed to sustain strong shaking events. It will be helpful to know what it would look like to have recovery standards for public buildings and other structures. If buildings are constructed to support functional recovery, it will speed the general recovery process.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Washington has the second highest earthquake risk in the country. Washington will face crippling damage if a serious earthquake occurs, and buildings, bridges, and other infrastructure will be rendered unusable. With a few exceptions, buildings are generally designed to preserve the lives of people, but that does not mean they could actually be used in the wake of an earthquake. Developing functional recovery standards would be a leap forward in building resilience. Oregon has done some work on functional recovery of school buildings, and they found that the associated costs were not significantly greater. This bill will allow the Department to assess work that has been done on functional recovery standards and make recommendations.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Brandy Donaghy, prime sponsor; and Corina Allen, Department of Natural Resources.

(Other) Robert Ezelle, Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.