
SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1899

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By House Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Volz, Schmidt, Chapman, Graham, Rule, Leavitt, Waters, Low, Christian, Couture, McClintock, Barnard, Jacobsen, Timmons, Schmick, Dent, Cheney, Sandlin, and Griffey)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/24.

1 AN ACT Relating to facilitating reconstruction of communities
2 damaged or destroyed by wildfires; adding a new section to chapter
3 43.31 RCW; creating new sections; and declaring an emergency.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** In recent years, devastating wildfires
6 have destroyed homes, businesses, and infrastructure. These wildfires
7 have become more frequent and more destructive due to the effects of
8 climate change. Since the original construction of many of the lost
9 structures, technological advances have made possible more energy
10 efficient buildings, greater use of electric vehicles, and more
11 opportunities to utilize solar energy. The insurance coverage for the
12 destroyed structures, however, may not cover reconstruction utilizing
13 new methods and technologies. As a result, many buildings may be
14 rebuilt in less efficient ways that require greater use of greenhouse
15 gases. These greenhouse gases, in turn, will exacerbate the threat of
16 wildfires.

17 It is the intent of the legislature to assist in disrupting this
18 cycle. By making grants available to local governments, businesses,
19 and individuals to repair or replace damaged or destroyed buildings
20 in more energy efficient and environmentally friendly ways, the
21 legislature will encourage a more sustainable use of resources and

1 increased climate resilience with resulting environmental benefits
2 for all of the people of the state.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.31
4 RCW to read as follows:

5 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
6 specific purpose, the department of commerce shall establish and
7 administer a grant program to provide assistance to qualifying
8 property owners and local governments that had buildings destroyed or
9 damaged in a wildfire after January 1, 2023. The department shall
10 develop a system for the submission and evaluation of grant
11 applications in consultation with the emergency management division
12 of the state military department and tribal and local government
13 emergency management authorities. The system developed by the
14 department must ensure that the grants are only used for the purposes
15 specified in this section.

16 (2) Grants may only be awarded to property owners who had
17 buildings damaged or destroyed during a wildfire and that meet the
18 following criteria:

19 (a) The area in which the building was damaged or destroyed was
20 under a state of emergency declared by the governor or a local
21 government due to wildfires at the time the building was destroyed;

22 (b) The building that was damaged or destroyed was a residential
23 home, including manufactured homes, a multifamily building, a
24 commercial building, or a public building;

25 (c) The same type of building as was damaged or destroyed in the
26 wildfire is being constructed or repaired; and

27 (d) The new or repaired building will comply with all current
28 state building and state energy code requirements in effect at the
29 time of the permit application for the construction or repair.

30 (3) Grants awarded under this section may only be used for the
31 purpose of meeting increased energy efficiency standards, providing
32 or increasing electric vehicle charging capacity, and the
33 installation and use of solar panels on a building that did not,
34 prior to being damaged or destroyed, utilize solar panels.

35 (4) The department shall develop criteria for awarding grants
36 under this section that is consistent with RCW 38.52.030(9) and, as
37 appropriate, with other disaster response and recovery programs. When
38 awarding grants, the department must prioritize any building that is
39 owned or rented by a low-income to moderate-income household.

1 Thereafter, the department must award grants based upon the amount of
2 energy efficiency, electric vehicle charging capacity, or solar
3 panels installation that will occur, with grants going first to those
4 buildings which will yield the greatest environmental benefits.

5 (5) For the purposes of this section:

6 (a) "Increased energy efficiency standards" means energy code
7 standards under chapter 19.27A RCW that have increased between the
8 time the building was originally constructed and the time that it is
9 to be repaired or rebuilt.

10 (b) "Local government" means a city, town, county, or special
11 purpose district.

12 (c) "Low-income or moderate-income household" means a single
13 person, family, or unrelated persons living together whose adjusted
14 income is at or below 120 percent of the median household income
15 adjusted for household size, for the county where the household is
16 located, as reported by the United States department of housing and
17 urban development.

18 (d) "Public building" means a building or building wholly owned
19 and used by a local government.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate
21 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
22 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
23 effect immediately.

24 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** If specific funding for the purposes of
25 this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not
26 provided by June 30, 2024, in the omnibus appropriations act, this
27 act is null and void.

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