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ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1201

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State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

**By** House Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans (originally sponsored by Representatives Leavitt, Ryu, Macri, Bronoske, Simmons, and Berg)

READ FIRST TIME 01/31/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to identifying accommodations allowing pets in an  
2 emergency or extreme weather event; adding a new section to chapter  
3 38.52 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that natural  
6 disasters and extreme weather events, including wildfire, flooding,  
7 earthquakes, extreme heat, and extreme cold present severe risks to  
8 public health and safety in Washington.

9 The legislature further finds that pets that are companion  
10 animals are particularly vulnerable to extreme weather conditions,  
11 including risk of heatstroke-related illness and death.

12 The legislature further finds that many families consider their  
13 companion animals to be family members. One of the most significant  
14 factors affecting evacuation decisions is companion animal ownership.  
15 Companion animal owners may refuse evacuation, attempt to reenter  
16 evacuated sites to rescue their companion animals, and experience  
17 grief, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder due to  
18 separation from their companion animal during an emergency. In  
19 addition, zoonotic disease risks increase when companion animals are  
20 abandoned or left to roam during an evacuation.

1 The legislature further finds that gaps in public preparedness  
2 and cosheltering opportunities during a disaster or extreme weather  
3 event increase the risk to public health and safety.

4 The legislature further finds that partnerships with  
5 nongovernmental organizations support emergency planning and  
6 preparedness and may be used to support identification and operation  
7 of coshelters.

8 Therefore, the legislature intends to provide guidance in  
9 increasing public preparedness and identifying shelters that can  
10 accommodate companion animals so that in the event of a disaster or  
11 extreme weather event, Washington residents will not have to choose  
12 between seeking safety and staying with their companion animals.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 38.52  
14 RCW to read as follows:

15 (1) A political subdivision, under existing plan structures,  
16 shall, to the extent practicable based on available resources and  
17 site-specific circumstances, address cosheltering for emergency  
18 shelters in each update of its local comprehensive emergency  
19 management plan required by RCW 38.52.070.

20 (2) A political subdivision, under existing plan structures,  
21 shall, to the extent practicable based on available resources and  
22 site-specific circumstances, identify emergency shelters able to  
23 accommodate persons with companion animals.

24 (3) Whenever a political subdivision identifies any number of  
25 emergency shelters in response to a natural disaster or extreme  
26 weather event, it should, to the extent practicable, identify at  
27 least one coshelter.

28 (4) An emergency shelter that is identified to accommodate  
29 persons with companion animals must have safety procedures regarding  
30 the sheltering of companion animals and comply with disaster  
31 assistance policies and procedures published by the federal emergency  
32 management agency.

33 (5) A political subdivision shall provide companion animal  
34 emergency preparedness information on its website, including:

35 (a) To the extent practicable, whether each identified emergency  
36 shelter can accommodate companion animals;

37 (b) Information for creating a companion animal evacuation plan  
38 and emergency checklist, consistent with the federal emergency  
39 management agency recommendations; and

1 (c) Identification of local organizations that provide emergency  
2 companion animal assistance.

3 (6) The following definitions apply to this section:

4 (a) "Companion animal" means a domesticated animal, such as a dog  
5 or cat, that is commonly kept in the home for pleasure rather than  
6 for commercial purposes;

7 (b) "Coshelter" means a temporary shelter that allows an  
8 individual to stay in an adjacent area or the same facility as a  
9 companion animal;

10 (c) "Emergency shelter" means a temporary location that provides  
11 basic shelter for individuals affected by an emergency or disaster;  
12 and

13 (d) "Existing plan structure" means planning documents describing  
14 how political subdivisions, in collaboration with nonprofit  
15 organizations, and state and federal government, will provide  
16 emergency shelter and temporary housing to individuals displaced by a  
17 disaster.

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