



HB – 1126 Mobilization of “All Risk Resources” During an Emergency

Background

Under RCW 43.43.961, the Fire Service Resource Mobilization Plan is implemented to provide personnel, equipment, and other logistical resources from around the state when a wildland fire **or other emergency** exceeds the firefighting capacity of local jurisdictions. The types of emergencies that may require state mobilization include **wildland fires, earthquakes, floods, spread of contagious disease**, and other disasters that local districts are unable to fully handle on their own.

Identified Problem

Recently, an Assistant Attorney General opinion was prepared that reinterpreted the governing RCW regarding state fire service mobilization. This opinion stated that the governing RCW should be interpreted to limit state mobilization to only incidents directly involving fire. This interpretation defeats the purpose of state fire service mobilization and would eliminate coordinated response of the various local fire districts to such disasters as floods, earthquakes, rescues, and pandemics.

Purpose of Legislation

This bill would remedy this dangerously narrow interpretation by codifying existing practice with respect to state mobilization, and does so without expanding the use of mobilization for purposes other than those already identified in both state and federal disaster response policies, including “other disasters of unprecedented size,” as outlined in RCW 43.43.961.

Support of the State Patrol

WFC has worked closely with the Washington State Patrol to create language that all parties support. The bill ensures that all mobilization requests will meet with the state Fire Mobilization Plan, while allowing the originally intended use of fire resources in much-needed emergency settings.

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The Washington Fire Chiefs Association urges your support of this important legislation.