



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, landslides, earthquakes, floods, spread of contagious disease**, and other disasters that local districts are unable to fully handle on their own.

Identified Problem

An informal opinion from an Assistant Attorney General 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 those incidents directly involving a 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 the dangerously narrow interpretation by re-codifying existing practice and original legislative intent with respect to state mobilization, and would do 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.”

Support of all Fire Service

WFC has worked closely with our fire service partners, including the Washington Fire Commissioners Association, the Washington State Council of Firefighters, and the Washington State Firefighters Association to create language that all parties support. The bill ensures that all mobilization requests will meet with the State Mobilization Plan, while allowing the originally intended use of fire service resources in much-needed emergency settings.

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