



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission

Oregon Emergency Management

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To: Governor Kate Brown, Chair Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon, Vice-Chairs Rep. Courtney Neron and Rep. Suzanne Weber, House Education Committee

From: Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission (OSSPAC)

Subject: HB 2608 - Pilot program for age-appropriate instruction for natural disasters

The mission of OSSPAC is to reduce the exposure of Oregonians to earthquake and tsunami hazards by improving public understanding of seismic risk, exposure and vulnerability, reducing and mitigating the possible effects of damaging earthquakes, and by reviewing and advising the Governor and Legislature on these issues. OSSPAC supports HB 2608 which creates a pilot program to assist school districts in providing age-appropriate instruction on natural disasters. OSSPAC is particularly interested in fostering initiatives that increase public knowledge and understanding of earthquake and tsunami risk, preparedness, and mitigation as a critical component of natural disaster education.

Message Equitably Disseminated to Broad Audience. Age-appropriate education through public schools is one of the most effective ways to reach a broad cross section of Oregonians. Not only do school aged students learn about natural hazards, but adult educators learn as they prepare to teach. Parents and extended families also learn when students share at home what they are learning at school.

Children Become Informed Citizens. Most importantly, school age students carry their knowledge about natural disasters and preparedness measures with them as they become adults. They become the informed citizens we want and need in Oregon to deal with natural disasters that can and will happen in the coming years.

Creates Culture of Preparedness. On March 18, 2018, a group representing more than 50 schools in Oregon called Parents4Preparedness testified to OSSPAC and made the case that if schools were required to educate students and parents about the risk of the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and the importance of preparedness, we would most certainly see less need for mass sheltering as a result. Just as recycling reached mass acceptance when outreach focused on children, we could create a culture of preparedness by focusing on K-12 education. When communities are more prepared, there is less reliance on an already stretched emergency management system.

Widespread public education about earthquakes, earthquake preparedness and safety are vitally important. HB 2608 will be an effective tool in building the resilience needed to safeguard Oregonians now and in the future. OSSPAC strongly urges the committee to recommend passage of HB 2608 as an effective and proactive bill.

Cc: Mike Harryman, State Resilience Officer