



Oregon

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Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission

Oregon Emergency Management

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To: Chairs Senator Brian Boquist and Representative John Lively, Senate and House Joint Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

From: Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission (OSSPAC)

Subject: Mass Displacement Planning for a Cascadia Earthquake and Tsunami Event

The Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission (OSSPAC) respectfully recommends that the Legislature determine an appropriate agency to be responsible for administering a Mass Displacement Planning Task Force during the 2017-2019 biennium.

OSSPAC is providing recommendations to convene a two-year task force to assess the scope of having tens of thousands of Oregonians permanently displaced and to evaluate strategies and priorities for managing their immediate needs for shelter, health and medical care, and transitional housing. As part of OSSPAC's current focus on community resilience, we strongly recommend the commitment of appropriate staff and critical community stakeholders to have a deliberative consideration of the issues involved and to develop a long-term approach, similar to the Oregon Resilience Plan (ORP), that bridges a top-down and ground-up approach to social and economic impacts in order to help save lives, protect communities, and keep commerce flowing.

The two-year task force would be administrated by either the Department of Human Services (DHS) or the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) based on our understanding of following:

- State agencies with Primary or Lead responsibilities are DHS (Mass Care), OHA (Health and Medical), and Oregon Housing and Community Services (Housing);
- Over 25,000 residents live inside the tsunami hazard zone and will be instantly displaced after a Cascadia event, with additional thousands of coastal visitors needing mass care until they can return home;
- Inland communities, especially along the I-5 corridor, will have concentrations of damaged residential structures that cannot be immediately repaired or reoccupied;
- These displaced residents are also employees that will be challenged to report to work cannot maintain productive contributions to their communities;
- Small businesses cannot endure disruption more than two-four weeks before going out of business;
- Maintaining the employee base for impacted communities will be necessary for recovery;
- Limited medical resources will be stretched to a breaking point as numerous vulnerable residents who manage their own health needs at home, become dislocated and then rapidly decline in shelters and due to social isolation from their daily support networks;
- Contracted and independent services for healthcare, social welfare, and community connections, that many vulnerable populations depend on, will struggle to return to service; and
- Many communities will require significant investments of time and resources before reconstruction and full recovery occurs, with disproportionate impacts to many disenfranchised populations.

The existing level of Oregon planning for disaster recovery, and especially for loss of housing, does not account for this scale and scope of a Cascadia event. The infrastructure and lifeline interdependencies identified in the ORP will compound these problems. This two-year assessment will bring recommendations to the 2019 Legislative Assembly for implementation that will be aligned with the ORP's 50-year plan.