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HOUSE BILL 2787

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State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Representatives Hurst, Roach, Simpson, Miloscia, Orwall, Sullivan, Hasegawa, Hudgins, Upthegrove, White, Chase, and Nelson

Read first time 01/14/10. Referred to Committee on Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness.

1 AN ACT Relating to Green river emergency flooding preparedness and  
2 response; adding a new section to chapter 38.52 RCW; making an  
3 appropriation; and declaring an emergency.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 38.52 RCW  
6 to read as follows:

7 (1) The legislature finds that recent flooding events over the last  
8 several years have put citizens and businesses in devastating  
9 situations that have resulted in extreme economic loss. This is  
10 particularly acute in the Green river watershed where the army corps of  
11 engineers has found the Howard Hanson dam to be structurally deficient.  
12 While it is important for the state to provide public safety and  
13 emergency response during an emergency resulting from a natural  
14 disaster, it is equally important to provide emergency preparedness and  
15 disaster mitigation information prior to an emergency, and recovery and  
16 disaster mitigation help after an emergency; all of which will  
17 contribute to making the public more prepared during an emergency  
18 response.

1 (2) Washington state's topography, geography, location, and history  
2 show that certain areas of the state are at particular risk to both  
3 natural disasters and human-caused disasters. The economic impact from  
4 the 2007 flood disasters alone in Washington were estimated at over  
5 five hundred million dollars. Current conditions at the Howard Hanson  
6 dam may cause overflows into the Green river valley area that greatly  
7 exceed channel capacity. Critical flood control levees may overtop and  
8 may weaken from saturation. Sudden changes in flood conditions are  
9 possible, especially in levee-protected areas. These changes may  
10 include rapidly rising water, Green river flooding, widespread  
11 inundation, road closures, utility disruptions, loss of homes, and the  
12 loss and closure of many businesses in the Renton, Tukwila, Auburn, and  
13 Kent areas located in the Green river valley. The Green river valley  
14 is one of the largest warehouse areas on the west coast. Severe  
15 flooding has the potential to damage businesses throughout the state  
16 and the western United States. In response, Washington state and local  
17 governments have implemented all hazards emergency management and  
18 disaster response plans. However, recent studies have revealed the  
19 lack of a secure funding source that impedes the Green river valley's  
20 ability to fully integrate and coordinate comprehensive disaster  
21 preparedness planning.

22 (3) Recognizing that all disasters are local disasters, the  
23 legislature intends to strengthen emergency response, mitigation,  
24 preparation, and coordination by establishing a source of funding for  
25 flood control and relocation of those private citizens and businesses  
26 that may be displaced during a flood disaster.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The sum of twenty-five million dollars,  
28 or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the  
29 biennium ending June 30, 2011, from the state building construction  
30 account to the Washington military department, working in cooperation  
31 with the flood division of the department of ecology, the King county  
32 flood control district, and other respective local governments, as  
33 appropriate, to participate in flood hazard mitigation and response  
34 projects for the Green river valley area.

35 (2) The Washington military department shall administer the Green  
36 river flood assistance funds and establish rules for its administration

1 in consultation with the emergency management council and the  
2 Washington state emergency management association. The Washington  
3 military department shall:

4 (a) Use no more than five million dollars of the funds appropriated  
5 for relocation costs (including, but not limited to, land acquisition)  
6 of public facilities, infrastructure, and citizens and businesses that  
7 are displaced by Green river flooding conditions; and

8 (b) Use no more than twenty million dollars of the funds  
9 appropriated for costs that are directed at prevention, including levy  
10 repair and strengthening, emergency response, including full access of  
11 federal funds, mitigation, preparation, coordination, and recovery.

12 (3) Projects funded under this section shall include, but need not  
13 be limited to, projects that will promote neighborhood level public  
14 education on disaster preparedness.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
16 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the  
17 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect  
18 immediately.

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