
**Community Development, Housing &
Tribal Affairs Committee**

HB 2022

Brief Description: Creating the natural disaster economic recovery account to support economic recovery from natural disasters.

Sponsors: Representatives Hawkins, Appleton, Johnson, Robinson, Zeiger, Blake, Haler, Parker, Kretz, Condotta, Short, Manweller, Tarleton, Ryu and Fitzgibbon.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Natural Disaster Economic Recovery Account to support the economic recovery in areas affected by a natural disasters.
- Authorizes the Department of Commerce to administer the Account and distribute funds to local authorities and nonprofit organizations in natural disaster areas.

Hearing Date: 2/16/15

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

State of Emergency.

The Governor has authority to proclaim a state of emergency for an area where public disorder, a disaster, an energy emergency, or riot threatens life, health, or property interests, or the public peace. A state of emergency provides the Governor with extended powers to impose special orders within the affected area.

The Governor proclaimed a state of emergency in July 2014 in response to the Carlton Complex Fire in North Central Washington, affecting Okanogan and Chelan counties. The Governor declared that the fire was the largest wild fire in state history, burning over 250,000 acres, destroying over 300 homes, and requiring over 2,000 people to evacuate the area. The Governor

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detailed the economic impact from the fires on agriculture and ranching, tourism, business communities, and commerce.

Department of Commerce.

The Department of Commerce (Department) generally serves the states interests regarding community and economic development as well as trade and business expansion. The department advises the Governor and administers various in areas such as affordable housing and related services, growth management, public infrastructure, business and trade, development of minority and women-owned business, technology development, and advocacy for low-income persons.

Summary of Bill:

The Natural Disaster Economic Recovery Account is created to support the economic recovery and development of areas within the state affected by a natural disaster. Account funds only may be used for areas where the Governor has declared a state of emergency due to a natural disaster.

Funding may be provided directly to a county, city, other local subdivisions, or a nonprofit organization dedicated to the long-term recovery from a natural disaster area. Expenditures are authorized for rebuilding infrastructure, economic development projects, affordable and transitional housing, small business loans and grant programs, and other services to support sustainable economic recovery efforts.

The Department must administer the Account and direct the expenditure of funds subject to appropriation. The Department also may receive private and public grants, donations, and emergency aid for the Account, and the Governor may expend those funds with the recommendation of the Director of the Department.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 2/13/15.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.