

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2214

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Public Safety

**Title:** An act relating to removing the prohibition on planning for a nuclear attack in emergency management plans.

**Brief Description:** Removing the prohibition on planning for a nuclear attack in emergency management plans.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Muri, Pike and Haler.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Public Safety: 1/22/18, 1/30/18 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Removes the prohibition against including preparations for emergency evacuation and relocation of residents in anticipation of a nuclear attack in state emergency management plans.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Pellicciotti, Vice Chair; Klippert, Ranking Minority Member; Hayes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Chapman, Griffey, Holy, Orwall, Pettigrew and Van Werven.

**Staff:** Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

**Background:**

The Washington Military Department, under the direction of the Adjutant General, administers the state's comprehensive program of emergency management. Emergency management includes preparation for and carrying out of all emergency functions to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters, to aid victims suffering from injury or damage resulting from disasters, and to provide support for search and rescue operations.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The Adjutant General is responsible for developing a comprehensive, all-hazard emergency plan for the state that includes an analysis of natural, technological, or human-caused hazards and procedures to coordinate local and state resources in responding to such hazards. With respect to federally owned areas, the Adjutant General may agree with the federal government or other agencies upon a plan of emergency management that may or may not conform to all state law requirements, with a view to integrating federally owned areas into the state comprehensive emergency management plan. Each political subdivision of the state is directed to establish a local organization or to be a member of a joint local organization for emergency management in accordance with the state comprehensive emergency management plan and program.

Emergency management, as defined, excludes planning for emergency evacuation and relocation of residents in anticipation of a nuclear attack. Neither the comprehensive emergency management plan nor any agreed federal-area emergency management plan may include preparation for emergency evacuation or relocation of residents in anticipation of a nuclear attack, and no political subdivision may be required to include such plans in local emergency management plans.

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**Summary of Bill:**

Provisions are removed that exclude preparation for emergency evacuation and relocation of residents in anticipation of a nuclear attack from the definition of emergency management, and that prohibit the state comprehensive emergency management plan and agreed federal-area plans from including preparation for emergency evacuation or relocation of residents in anticipation of a nuclear attack.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This language was initially put into the code in the 1980s. It was a different time, and legislators thought that planning for an attack might make it more likely. Today, there is worry about a rogue attack. To not be able to plan inhibits the ability to survive a worst case scenario. A nuclear weapon would cause a lot of destruction. If there are plans in place, it may mitigate the effects of the attack.

(Opposed) There is a sense that the current law prohibition is for all planning of a nuclear attack, but it is actually limited to planning for evacuation and relocation. It does not prohibit

planning for response to an attack. There is a risk that adversaries could view this change in a such a way that increases nuclear tension and the likelihood of nuclear war. Public policy should help people recognize the truth, not deceive them. This policy change furthers the illusion that relocation and evacuation are preemptive remedies, and that nuclear war is survivable. If a nuclear attack happened the public would only have a few minutes. The Reagan Administration discussed winning a nuclear war by relocating a significant portion of the population, and the message at that time was that Americans would win a nuclear war by losing fewer people than we killed. People were told that if nuclear war is imminent, they should dig a hole and cover it with a door and three feet of dirt—that if there were enough shovels to go around people would be okay. This is preposterous. This is bonehead thinking. There were bizarre plans locally as well, like putting Seattle residents on city buses, driving them to Yakima, and repeating that until all people had been moved. This is phony baloney planning. It has long been discredited that evacuation would be effective in a nuclear attack. All efforts must focus on reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons; other efforts are misleading and irresponsible and perpetuate the myth that people can survive a nuclear attack. Resources should be put into legitimate preparation efforts, and this bill would roll us backward into a culture of lies.

(Other) The prohibitions against preparation for emergency evacuation or relocation should be removed. Currently the Military Department has a modest staff operating at full capacity, planning under an all-hazard approach. If the Legislature wants the Military Department to start planning for nuclear attack response, additional resources would be required.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Muri, prime sponsor.

(Opposed) James Thomas; and Glen Anderson.

(Other) Jason Marquiss, Washington Military Department.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.