

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2508

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

**Title:** An act relating to fire service mobilization.

**Brief Description:** Repealing an expiration date that affects state fire service mobilization.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Goodman and Griffey.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Public Safety: 1/23/18, 1/30/18 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Makes prior temporary changes to fire services mobilization permanent, including expansion of the scope of mobilization to include all risk resources.

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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 Chief of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) has the authority to mobilize jurisdictions under the Washington State Fire Services Mobilization Plan. A mobilization is warranted when a local disaster necessitates resources beyond those available through existing agreements. During a large-scale emergency, mobilization includes the redistribution of regional or statewide firefighting resources to either direct emergency incident assignments or to assignments in communities where firefighting resources are needed.

From the time a state mobilization is declared, all fire protection authorities providing resources in response to the mobilization declaration are eligible for expense reimbursement.

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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.*

State and local agencies that participate in a mobilization generally receive reimbursement through the state's Disaster Response Account.

In 2015 the Legislature expanded "mobilization" beyond general firefighting to include all risk resources regularly provided by fire departments, districts, and regional fire protection authorities. "All risk resources" include those resources regularly provided by fire departments, fire districts, and regional fire protection authorities in response to natural or manmade incidents, including but not limited to wildland fires, landslides, earthquakes, floods, and contagious diseases. The definition of "mobilization" was also amended to state that fire department resources may not be mobilized to assist law enforcement with police activities during a civil protest or demonstration, but fire authorities are not restricted from providing medical care or aid and firefighting when mobilized for any purpose.

The Chief of the WSP must report annually regarding each emergency or disaster in which the Washington State Fire Service Mobilization Plan was used for purposes other than fire suppression. The expanded scope of state fire services mobilization expires July 1, 2019.

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**Summary of Bill:**

The July 1, 2019, expiration date on the changes to fire services mobilization is removed. The expanded definition of mobilization to include all risk resources, and the prohibition against mobilization of fire resources to assist with police activities during protests and demonstrations, are permanent.

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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) The policies that are extended by this bill were put in place to address a previous restriction with respect to mobilizing for major non-fire incidents. Fire services are usually first on the scene of an incident, but it used to be that fire services could only respond to fire incidents and not other types of incidents, like earthquakes and landslides. When the Oso landslide happened, fire services were kept on the perimeter and not allowed to help. Now, under the "all risk resources" model, it is clear that fire services can engage in these types of incidents. Fire services feel this was essentially a clarification, as they have long thought they could respond to all incidents and not just fires. The recent interpretation issues, however, led to the need for a change in statute. There was concern at the time when this expansion went into effect that it would create budget issues, but that has not occurred. Since the change went into effect there have been 68 mobilizations, but none of these were for non-

fire incidents. It is time to remove the sunset and continue to allow fire services to respond to any risk and hazard into the future.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Goodman, prime sponsor; and Dylan Doty, Washington Fire Chiefs.

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