

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 2680

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As of February 26, 2020

**Title:** An act relating to establishing tribal representation on the emergency management council.

**Brief Description:** Establishing tribal representation on the emergency management council.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Chapman, Jenkin, Steele, Walsh, Tarleton, Ortiz-Self, Gildon, Tharinger, Springer, Santos, Kretz and Pollet.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/18/20, 97-0.

**Committee Activity:** State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/26/20.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds two members from tribal governments to the Emergency Management Council (Council).
- Creates a Tribal Advisory Committee as a subcommittee of the Council.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Staff:** Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

**Background:** The Council advises the Governor and the adjutant general on all matters pertaining to state and local emergency management. The Council must prepare an annual assessment of statewide emergency preparedness and review administrative rules governing state and local emergency management practices. The Council is limited to 18 members appointed by the adjutant general.

The membership of the council shall include, but not be limited to, representatives of:

- city and county governments;
- sheriffs and police chiefs;
- the Washington State Patrol;
- the Military Department;
- the Department of Ecology;
- state and local fire chiefs;

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- seismic safety experts;
- state and local emergency management directors;
- search and rescue volunteers;
- medical professions who have expertise in emergency medical care;
- building officials;
- private industry representatives with knowledge in emergency and hazardous materials management; and
- the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The Council members shall elect a chair from within the Council membership. The members of the Council serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

**Summary of Bill:** The membership of the Council is expanded to include two members representing tribal governments, appointed by the Tribal Advisory Committee (Committee). The Committee is created as a subcommittee of the Council. The Committee consists of up to 29 members, allowing each tribe in the state to appoint a representative. Committee meetings must be held at least annually. The Committee will:

- appoint two tribal representatives to serve on the Council, one from an eastern tribe in Washington, and one from a western tribe in Washington;
- provide tribal technical expertise to the Council; and
- provide important information to the 29 tribes on policies or actions by the Council that may impact any of the tribes.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The Washington emergency management system has a dangerous gap. The Council holds seats for cities, counties and other partners but not tribal representation. Twenty-nine sovereign nations are not at the table, or part of the planning and strategies to protect Washington citizens. States and locals do not have jurisdictions over these 29 nations or tribal lands. It is imperative that tribal representation is a part of local, state and federal management operations to make sure that things happen. A number of years ago during the avian flu epidemic, the vaccinations were being distributed across the state but not all tribes got the vaccine. Fires, floods, diseases and other disasters do not stop at jurisdictional borders. There needs to be coordinated planning so that there is adequate response during and after these disasters. Tribes have expertise and assets that could be helpful during these disasters, such as equipment and shelters, and tribes want to do their part to help protect all Washington citizens.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Lou Schmitz, American Indian Health Commission for Washington State; Steve Kutz, Cowlitz Tribe.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.