
Community & Economic Development Committee

HB 1620

Brief Description: Addressing the response to extreme weather events.

Sponsors: Representatives Leavitt, Boehnke, Shewmake, Ryu, Robertson, Wicks, Duerr, Ramel, Valdez, Bronoske, Callan, Ramos, Rule, Santos, Simmons, Pollet, Hackney and Taylor.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Military Department to develop and implement an extreme weather response grant program for the purpose of assisting with the costs of responding to community needs during periods of extremely hot or cold weather.

Hearing Date: 1/12/22

Staff: Emily Poole (786-7106).

Background:

The state's role in disaster recovery depends on the complexity of an incident and the capacity of a local jurisdiction or tribe to manage recovery efforts. In general, the state functions as a coordinating entity for state and federal resources and facilitates relationships between jurisdictions, agencies and private organizations.

The Military Department (Department) leads and coordinates the state's preparedness, response, and recovery efforts to minimize the impacts of disasters and emergencies, including by coordinating a number of grants available to state and local jurisdictions. The Adjutant General is required to administer a state program for emergency assistance to individuals who are victims

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of a natural disaster. Natural disasters include events that demand immediate action to protect public health or to provide relief to affected communities, as well as events that reach such a degree of destructiveness as to warrant the governor proclaiming a state of emergency. The emergency assistance program may include grants, loans, or gifts of services, equipment, supplies, or funds to individuals who need assistance and who meet certain eligibility standards. Funds from the Disaster Response Account in the state treasury may be used for support of state agency and local government disaster response and recovery efforts.

Summary of Bill:

The Military Department (Department) is required to develop and implement an extreme weather response grant program for the purpose of assisting political subdivisions and federally recognized tribes with the costs of responding to community needs during periods of extremely hot or cold weather. The Department may adopt rules to administer the program. The Department may award grants to political subdivisions and federally recognized tribes for reimbursement of costs if the costs are incurred:

1. by communities that have demonstrated a lack of local resources to address community needs; and
2. for the benefit of socially vulnerable populations.

Costs associated with the following activities are eligible for reimbursement:

- establishing and operating warming and cooling centers;
- transporting individuals to warming and cooling centers;
- purchasing supplies needed for cooling of congregate living settings;
- providing emergency temporary housing; and
- other related activities necessary for life safety.

Funds from the Disaster Response Account may be used to award grants as part of the extreme weather response grant program.

For purposes of these requirements, "political subdivision" means any county, city, or town that has established a local organization for emergency management or any joint local organization for emergency management.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 5, 2022.

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