H-1071.1

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**HOUSE BILL 1810**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Donaghy, Reeves, Walen, Ramel, Bernbaum, Low, Reed, Paul, Santos, Berry, Nance, Pollet, and Zahn

AN ACT Relating to seismic hazard risk reduction; creating new sections; and providing expiration dates.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that Washington has the second highest earthquake risk in the United States. A major seismic event will result in loss of life and injury due to structural collapse. The state has an 86 percent chance of experiencing a damaging earthquake between now and the next 50 years. A damaging earthquake will happen during our lifetime, and we are unprepared. The seismic retrofit of collapse-prone buildings is critical for ensuring the safety of our citizens and reducing economic disruption. Unreinforced masonry buildings, classic red brick buildings of common construction prior to World War II, were built for their fire resistance and are at risk of collapse in an earthquake due to their lack of reinforcing steel and inadequate connections. A full or partial collapse of these structures is significantly reduced by conducting seismic retrofits, bracing parapets, and strengthening connections between the floors, walls, and roof.

The legislature further finds that supporting the identification and earthquake retrofit of unreinforced masonry buildings will increase public safety in the event of an earthquake, reducing deaths, injuries, property damages, displacement, and economic disruption.

The legislature further finds that financial resources are needed to assist owners of unreinforced masonry buildings in conducting these lifesaving earthquake retrofits. Local jurisdictions have been unable to mandate the retrofit of these vulnerable structures, citing the economic unviability it poses for building owners who will be forced to pass costs along to tenants, decreasing the already limited stock of affordable housing.

Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to support public safety, earthquake readiness, and affordable housing by identifying feasible opportunities to reduce the financial burden associated with conducting seismic retrofits of unreinforced masonry buildings.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department of commerce must conduct a study regarding financial incentives to reduce the financial burden associated with the seismic retrofit of unreinforced masonry buildings.

(2) The study must, at a minimum, include impact analysis and policy recommendations for:

(a) The modification and expansion of the special valuation tax;

(b) The expansion of current use taxation;

(c) Opportunities for time-limited exemptions under state property tax, excise tax, sales tax, business and occupation tax, or other tax structures;

(d) The use of valuation of special assessments and assessment zones; and

(e) The identification of financial incentives for tax-exempt entities, such as schools, nonprofits, and religious organizations.

(3) The department of commerce must request input from the state association of county assessors, American institute of architects Washington chapter, structural engineers association of Washington, the department of revenue, and the joint legislative audit and review committee.

(4) The department of commerce must submit a preliminary report on the outcomes of the completed study to the appropriate committees of the legislature by June 30, 2026, and a final report must be submitted by September 1, 2026. The report must also include policy recommendations relating to financial incentives for the retrofit of unreinforced masonry buildings.

(5) This section expires December 31, 2026.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the emergency management division of the Washington military department must complete the inventory and categorization of unreinforced masonry buildings in Washington, as directed in section 1009, chapter 298, Laws of 2018.

(2) The inventory must include:

(a) Review of existing survey and data sources, including the state's historic resources database and Sanborn maps to identify and confirm unreinforced masonry construction;

(b) Ground truthing of suspected unreinforced masonry to confirm construction type and vulnerability; and

(c) Upload unreinforced masonry data into the Washington system for architectural and archaeological records data portal and dashboard to enable local jurisdictions to view, download, and use to guide unreinforced masonry retrofit efforts, hazard mitigation plans, and emergency management plans.

(3) The emergency management division of the Washington military department must submit a preliminary report on the progress of the completed inventory to the appropriate committees of the legislature by September 1, 2027. The statewide unreinforced masonry inventory must be completed by June 30, 2030.

(4) This section expires December 31, 2030.

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