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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

Read first time 02/03/25. Referred to Committee on Appropriations.

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

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that Washington has  
5 the second highest earthquake risk in the United States. A major  
6 seismic event will result in loss of life and injury due to  
7 structural collapse. The state has an 86 percent chance of  
8 experiencing a damaging earthquake between now and the next 50 years.  
9 A damaging earthquake will happen during our lifetime, and we are  
10 unprepared. The seismic retrofit of collapse-prone buildings is  
11 critical for ensuring the safety of our citizens and reducing  
12 economic disruption. Unreinforced masonry buildings, classic red  
13 brick buildings of common construction prior to World War II, were  
14 built for their fire resistance and are at risk of collapse in an  
15 earthquake due to their lack of reinforcing steel and inadequate  
16 connections. A full or partial collapse of these structures is  
17 significantly reduced by conducting seismic retrofits, bracing  
18 parapets, and strengthening connections between the floors, walls,  
19 and roof.

20 The legislature further finds that supporting the identification  
21 and earthquake retrofit of unreinforced masonry buildings will

1 increase public safety in the event of an earthquake, reducing  
2 deaths, injuries, property damages, displacement, and economic  
3 disruption.

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

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

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts  
16 appropriated for this specific purpose, the department of commerce  
17 must conduct a study regarding financial incentives to reduce the  
18 financial burden associated with the seismic retrofit of unreinforced  
19 masonry buildings.

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

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

23 (b) The expansion of current use taxation;

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

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

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

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

36 (4) The department of commerce must submit a preliminary report  
37 on the outcomes of the completed study to the appropriate committees  
38 of the legislature by June 30, 2026, and a final report must be  
39 submitted by September 1, 2026. The report must also include policy

1 recommendations relating to financial incentives for the retrofit of  
2 unreinforced masonry buildings.

3 (5) This section expires December 31, 2026.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts  
5 appropriated for this specific purpose, the emergency management  
6 division of the Washington military department must complete the  
7 inventory and categorization of unreinforced masonry buildings in  
8 Washington, as directed in section 1009, chapter 298, Laws of 2018.

9 (2) The inventory must include:

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

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

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

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

25 (4) This section expires December 31, 2030.

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