
HOUSE BILL 1012

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By Representatives Leavitt and Robertson

Prefiled 12/06/22.

1 AN ACT Relating to responding to extreme weather events; amending
2 RCW 38.52.105; adding a new section to chapter 38.52 RCW; and
3 creating new sections.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** This act may be known and cited as the
6 extreme weather protection act.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The legislature finds that cold storm
8 patterns in the winter months, dangerous heat waves in the summer,
9 and other major weather events present severe public health
10 challenges for individuals and families in Washington.

11 (2) Moreover, the legislature finds that these challenges are not
12 experienced equally across the population. The elderly, people with
13 disabilities, people with low incomes, farmworkers, people
14 experiencing homelessness, and people who historically were zoned to
15 areas that faced increased environmental impacts during weather
16 events are the most at risk for losing their life or being severely
17 impacted by weather-related ailments.

18 (3) The legislature finds that pets are particularly vulnerable
19 to extreme weather conditions, including increased risk of
20 heatstroke-related illness and death, and the inability for pet

1 owners to find pet friendly accommodations is a major barrier to
2 accessing heating and cooling centers and other resources and
3 prevents individuals from evacuating to safety.

4 (4) The legislature finds that during the record heatwave of
5 2021, the deadliest weather-related disaster in Washington on record,
6 over 100 people in Washington and nearly 800 people in the northwest
7 region lost their lives as a result of inability to access cooling
8 centers or resources and hundreds more visited emergency rooms with
9 heat-related illnesses.

10 (5) The legislature acknowledges that according to scientists at
11 the Pacific Northwest national laboratory, it is predicted that these
12 severe weather events will happen more frequently because of the
13 changing climate.

14 (6) The legislature finds that the cost to local governments to
15 provide heating and cooling centers are sometimes insurmountable and
16 intends to provide supplemental resources to local jurisdictions and
17 tribal partners where local resources are not available during
18 extreme weather events.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 38.52
20 RCW to read as follows:

21 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
22 specific purpose, the department shall develop and implement an
23 extreme weather response grant program for the purpose of assisting
24 political subdivisions and federally recognized tribes with the costs
25 of responding to community needs during periods of extremely hot or
26 cold weather or in situations of severe poor air quality from
27 wildfire smoke. The department may adopt rules to administer the
28 extreme weather response grant program.

29 (2) The department may award grants to political subdivisions and
30 federally recognized tribes for reimbursement of costs in accordance
31 with subsection (3) of this section if the costs were incurred by
32 communities that have demonstrated a lack of local resources to
33 address community needs and were incurred for the benefit of socially
34 vulnerable populations. Social vulnerability refers to the resilience
35 of communities when confronted by external stresses on human health,
36 such as natural or human-caused disasters. Socially vulnerable
37 populations include, but are not limited to, individuals with
38 disabilities, individuals without vehicles, older adults, individuals

1 with low incomes or experiencing homelessness, and individuals with
2 limited English proficiency.

3 (3) The costs associated with the following activities are
4 eligible for reimbursement under the extreme weather response grant
5 program:

6 (a) Establishing and operating warming and cooling centers,
7 including rental of equipment, purchase of supplies and water,
8 staffing, and other associated costs;

9 (b) Transporting individuals and their pets to warming and
10 cooling centers;

11 (c) Purchasing fans or other supplies needed for cooling of
12 congregate living settings;

13 (d) Providing emergency temporary housing such as rental of a
14 hotel or convention center;

15 (e) Retrofitting or establishing facilities within warming and
16 cooling centers that are pet friendly in order to permit individuals
17 to evacuate with their pets; and

18 (f) Other related activities necessary for life safety during a
19 period of extremely hot or cold weather or in situations of severe
20 poor air quality from wildfire smoke as determined by the department.

21 (4) The department shall, upon request, provide information to
22 political subdivisions and federally recognized tribes regarding the
23 establishment and operation of warming and cooling centers.

24 (5) Grant funding awarded under this section must be used to
25 supplement, not supplant, other federal, state, and local funding for
26 emergency response.

27 (6) For purposes of this section, "political subdivision" means
28 any county, city, or town that has established a local organization
29 for emergency management or any joint local organization for
30 emergency management established pursuant to RCW 38.52.070.

31 **Sec. 4.** RCW 38.52.105 and 2022 c 157 s 10 are each amended to
32 read as follows:

33 The disaster response account is created in the state treasury.
34 Moneys may be placed in the account from legislative appropriations
35 and transfers, federal appropriations, or any other lawful source.
36 Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation.
37 Expenditures from the account may be used only for support of state
38 agency and local government disaster response and recovery efforts,
39 including the awarding of grants under section 3 of this act,

1 response by state and local government and federally recognized
2 tribes to the novel coronavirus pursuant to the gubernatorial
3 declaration of emergency of February 29, 2020, and to reimburse the
4 workers' compensation funds and self-insured employers under RCW
5 51.16.220. Expenditures from the disaster response account may be
6 used for military department operations and to support wildland fire
7 suppression preparedness, prevention, and restoration activities by
8 state agencies and local governments. The legislature may direct the
9 treasurer to make transfers of moneys in the disaster response
10 account to the state general fund.

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