

KATE BROWN
GOVERNOR



Date: March 1, 2021
To: Senators Manning, Thomsen, Linthicum, and Patterson
From: Mike Harryman, State Resilience Officer, Office of Governor Kate Brown
RE: Support for SB-288

Today I would like to provide you with background information regarding SB-288 – how it was developed and what we would like to see come out of this bill.

This year the Oregon Resilience Plan turns 8, this 50-year plan addresses reducing the risk and improving recovery for the next Cascadia Earthquake and tsunami, but it is also used by the Governor's Office and many others as a baseline to build resiliency in Oregon. Over the past 8 years additional reports have been done by the Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission (OSSPAC), one of these reports titled: *Mass Care and Mass Displacement* was completed September 2018, and those recommendations connect with what we are learning from the After Action Reports (AARs) on COVID-19 and the 2020 wildfires.

In October 2018, Governor Brown released her Resiliency 2025 Vision that was the cornerstone of SB 1537 during the February session, that bill did get voted out of this committee on a 5-0 vote. One of the six strategic visions of that bill was getting 250K Oregon households two-week ready.

Flooding in Eastern Oregon was the first crisis to hit our state in early 2020; then COVID-19 happened; the wildfires over Labor Day weekend; and most recently, an ice storm in the Willamette Valley that had adverse weather affect most of the state.

At the recommendations of myself, Mr. Andrew Phelps (OEM) and the Adjutant General Major General Mike Stencel, Department of Administrative Services conducted a review of vendors who have shown experience in conducting large-scale AARs. Emergency Management Partners or as they are known in the industry, EM Partners, headquartered in Virginia were selected. Using virtual means EM Partners conducted individual and group interviews, they also incorporated targeted surveys, depending on which group EM Partners was working with.

I am happy to provide this committee with a more in-depth overview of the AARs, but today I want to cover a few of the recommendations that EM Partners identified - which also connect back to Governor Brown's vision and the OSSPAC report mentioned earlier.

- Engaging health equity staff and local partner organizations to better serve vulnerable populations through their trusted sources. Plans need to be critically reviewed and update with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.
- To ensure vulnerable populations and access and functional needs populations are included in emergency preparedness programs.

- This includes trusted sources with our faith base organizations, communication base organizations and non-profits serving Oregonians every day.

The resiliency of individuals, communities, businesses, tribal nations, and public entities has been tested. Many Oregonians have stepped up to support their communities - from community and faith based organizations to non-profits, such as those that are helping with food and water security efforts.

While ‘being resilient’ has different meanings across communities, strong relationships and trust are essential elements in local resilience and communities functioning prior to, during, and after a disaster. Resiliency requires formal and informal governance structures that support the entirety of a community, and social capital and social connectedness are essential for effective governance. As risks and threats increasingly cross jurisdictional boundaries, communities across the state will need to strengthen their connections and relationships for effective responses to future natural- or manmade-disasters.

During the summer of 2020, the Governor’s Office created LC 471 (now SB 288) to address resiliency issues stemming from the 2018 OSSPAC report, Governor Brown’s Resiliency 2025 Vision, and COVID-19 AARs that highlighted the impact these disasters had on BIPOC, Tribal, and other underserved communities.

We received the bill back from legislative counsel as we completed the Governor’s Recommended Budget, and learning from our After Action Reports (AAR) on COVID-19 and our draft AAR on wildland fires, the Governor’s Office decided to make a course correction by submitting an amendment to SB 288 prior to its first public hearing to better reflect our goals. An overview of those changes are:

- Expands definition of “qualified emergency service volunteers” to include volunteers that represent BIPOC, Tribal, Middle Eastern, and LGBTQ communities, as well as those who represent immigrants, refugees, and persons with disabilities.
- Addresses gaps in the Emergency Management Assistance Compact for Oregon Health Authority “qualified emergency service volunteers.”
- Expands responsibilities of State Resilience Officer to lead statewide mitigation efforts that address findings from the Oregon Resilience Plan; lead executive branch agencies on continuity of operations planning and continuity of government planning training and exercises; and support government response to actual events as a member of the Governor’s disaster cabinet.
- Establishes the Unreinforced Masonry Seismic Safety Program to award grants for improving the seismic safety, stability, and resiliency of eligible properties, and promoting improvements in seismic safety, stability, and resiliency that will lead to private investment, job creation, and retention.

For additional information on this bill and the informational hearing that was February 23, 2021, please see the meeting materials [here](#).