



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission

Oregon Emergency Management

Mailing Address: PO Box 14370

Salem, OR 97309-5062

Phone: (503) 378-2911

Fax: (503) 373-7833

Date: May 11, 2021

To: Governor Kate Brown, Chair Senator Kayse Jama, Vice-Chair Senator Dennis Linthicum,  
Senate Committee On Housing and Development

From: Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission (OSSPAC)

Subject: HB 2605 - Incorporates National Tsunami Design Standards Back into Oregon's Building  
Code

The mission of OSSPAC is to reduce the exposure of Oregonians to earthquake and tsunami hazards by improving public understanding of seismic risk, exposure and vulnerability, reducing and mitigating the possible effects of damaging earthquakes, and by reviewing and advising the Governor and Legislature on these issues. HB 2605 will ensure a minimum tsunami design standard for critical and significant structures constructed in Oregon's coastal communities. At the same time, each community will be able to determine the land-use standards that best fit their circumstances. OSSPAC supports the passage of HB2605.

**Ensures Uniform Safety Standard for Critical and Significant Structures** When HB 3309 was passed in 2019 it removed a 25-year moratorium on constructing critical buildings in the tsunami inundation zone on the Oregon coast. Part of the rationale for ending this moratorium were the restrictions it placed on land-use planning. However, this approach leaves future critical buildings vulnerable to potentially disastrous consequences if they are constructed without considering tsunami loading. HB 2605 adopts the tsunami design provisions contained in the American Society of Civil Engineers ASCE-7 Standard. This will provide a minimum design and safety standard for any critical and significant structures constructed in the inundation zone, while freeing communities to determine the land use policies that best fit their needs and circumstances.

**Adopts Tsunami Design Standard from National Building Code** Oregon's Building's Code Division (BCD) typically adopts an updated version of the building code every three to six years. This code, known as the Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC) is based on the International Building Code (IBC) which references standards such as ASCE-7. In Oregon's most recent code cycle, BCD adopted the tsunami provisions in ASCE-7 but put them in an optional Appendix that must be adopted by each jurisdiction in Oregon to be binding. HB 2605 incorporates these provisions into Oregon's statutes, which combined with the OSSC aligns Oregon's building code with the design standards adopted by all other Pacific coast states.

HB 2605 is a vital step in ensuring the future safety of critical buildings on the coast and OSSPAC supports its passage. For an in-depth discussion and other recommendations regarding tsunami resilience, please see OSSPAC's recent report, **Tsunami Resilience on the Oregon Coast**, January, 2021.

Cc: Mike Harryman, State Resilience Officer