



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES OF OREGON

“The Engineers”

MEMO OF SUPPORT FOR HB 2881

DATE: January 28, 2021
TO: Oregon Legislative members
FROM: Alison Davis, Executive Director

This memo is to confirm the support of the American Council of Engineering Companies for HB 2881, a bill for developing and administering a resiliency program to assess building conditions after an emergency and determine whether buildings may be safely occupied.

Passage of HB 2881 would set up an organized, consistent, and coordinated post-disaster safety assessment program. Post-emergency evaluation of structures is a critical piece of the toolbox Oregon needs to recover after a large natural disaster like the expected Cascadia Earthquake or any other natural disaster.

Because of the dedication to improving building codes to address seismic design, along with investments by building owners in retrofitting their buildings over the past years, not all buildings will fail in a disaster like an earthquake. This program will facilitate economic recovery by returning people to safe buildings, houses, and businesses more quickly.

Within the engineering industry there are many qualified professionals in urban areas across the state who are familiar with local buildings and codes and are willing and able to help after a disaster. This new program will facilitate their assistance to recover from natural disasters.

With this program in place, the need for shelters will be reduced because buildings will be assessed, and their conditions identified and documented. Buildings can be re-occupied and the community will recover from the event sooner. This approach will also help emergency managers focus on the needs of the most vulnerable.

This same approach is being successfully employed in our neighbor states. Without this program, Oregon is lagging in preparedness for a large disaster. More importantly, Oregon can continue to find ways to increase resiliency and improve our post-disaster response for both the citizens living here and for the businesses that drive our economy.