

March 12, 2023

To: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis, Vice-chair Tran, Rep. Conrad, Rep. Dexter, Rep. Evans,
Rep. Hieb
Re: Support for HB 3486 Schools as Earthquake Relief Shelters

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Lewis and Tran, and members of the Committee,

This bill and proposed amendment seek to make basic, cost effective, changes that will ensure Oregon's schools and community colleges can be used as shelters following a Cascadia subduction zone earthquake. These facilities are commonly used for such purposes given their distribution and connection to the communities they serve. Unfortunately, most of Oregon's schools are not up to this task following a Cascadia event.

The State's Seismic Retrofit Grant Program (SRGP) has been a successful effort to seismically upgrade Oregon's existing schools. It will save lives, but the upgrades are not sufficient to ensure their use as shelters. Current seismic codes allow a level of damage that also renders newer schools unusable. When the Oregon Resilience Plan was adopted by the State, a number of school districts adopted its recommendation to ensure that their schools could be used as shelters. The first to do so was the Beaverton School District (BSD) which implemented resilience measures that are included in this measure and described in other testimony. Other schools districts have followed suit.

There are fears that seismic resilience measures are expensive, yet BSD's experience showed these resilience measures cost only 1% to 2% of building costs. Taxpayers in Oregon have shown a willingness to support seismic resilience measures. Passage of such a bill will be a major step in the implementation of the ORP, bringing the State closer to seismic resilience.

OSSPAC's Mass Care and Mass Displacement Report found there is confusion about operational roles and responsibilities of providing shelter spaces and shelter services. Local communities are responsible for finding shelter spaces which are then run by organizations such as the Red Cross. Typically, this is done following a hazard event using lists of potential facilities whose ability to be useable after a Cascadia event are unknown. The amendment directs ODEM, the State Resilience Officer and the Department of Education to work with stakeholders to bring clarity to this situation.

Sincerely,



Jay Raskin, FAIA
Past Chair and Vice-Chair of OSSPAC

cc: File