

Institute for Sustainable Solutions

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House Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans Committee
900 Court Street NE
Hearing Room C
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Grayber and Members of the Committee,

The Institute for Sustainable Solutions at Portland State University has worked alongside academics, public servants, and community members working to make Oregon more resilient to the unique seismic risks we face in our state. Our recent work with Multnomah County revealed the potential dangers that may come from hazardous materials release following a major earthquake. Oregon needs to take a closer look at the extent of this risk in order to create an adequate mitigation plan and keep our communities safe.

As you likely know, we have learned much about the Cascadia Subduction Zone and presence of liquefiable soils in our state relatively recently. We didn't have the knowledge to be cautious about this risk for most of our State's history when we were developing land, citing industry, designing building codes. We also know that we do not have adequate resources to respond to every need following a major earthquake. The release of toxic hazardous materials is a uniquely challenging danger in that there are few protective actions emergency managers can recommend for individuals to help themselves. Not only will a hazardous material release impact community members in the vicinity, but it creates a significant challenge to first responders who will already be challenged to do their jobs following an earthquake.

Gaining a better understanding of the real risk and implementing mitigation is essential to protecting life, reducing serious injuries. We also know that investing in mitigation is a financially sound investment, according to the National Institute of Building Sciences, for every dollar spent on earthquake mitigation we save between \$3 and \$13. HB 4044 is a logical next step toward creating a sensible mitigation plan. The bill will help policy makers design an appropriate program to prevent death and injury.

Investing in a study and a mitigation program to follow will reduce the burden on our first responders and protect communities. We urge your support of this important bill.

Please contact, Beth Gilden (bgilden@pdx.edu) if you have any questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Beth Gilden