



VANESSA CORNWALL

Intergovernmental Relations Officer
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DATE: February 4, 2025
TO: Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs
FROM: Vanessa Cornwall, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Manager
RE: SB 505, relating to County Emergency Management

Dear Chair Manning, Jr., Co-Chair Thatcher and Members of the Committee:

Lane County strongly supports Senate Bill 505, which aims to enhance county-level emergency preparedness across Oregon. This bill is a crucial step in ensuring that our communities are well-equipped to respond to and recover from disasters, including the threat of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and tsunami.

As we have seen, emergencies and natural disasters disproportionately impact local communities, and our ability to respond effectively depends on strong, well-funded emergency management systems at the county level. SB 505 addresses this need by creating a grant program to support emergency preparedness coordinators in seven coastal counties—including Lane—where the risks of seismic activity and other emergencies are high.

This bill recognizes that local preparedness is the foundation of statewide resilience. By directing the Oregon Department of Emergency Management to establish a grant program, SB 505 ensures that counties have dedicated personnel focused on emergency planning, response coordination, and recovery efforts. These coordinators will play a vital role in enhancing interagency collaboration, improving communication with residents, and ensuring that our emergency plans are current, tested, and effective.

Additionally, SB 505 takes a forward-thinking approach by convening a Committee on County Emergency Management under the Emergency Preparedness Advisory Council. This committee will study and provide recommendations on how to establish dedicated funding for county emergency management personnel, including the potential for a director and deputy director in each county. Such efforts are essential for sustaining long-term emergency preparedness efforts beyond a single grant cycle.

SB 505 will make a strong commitment to local emergency preparedness. Investing in county emergency management is an investment in the safety and resilience of all Oregonians.

**ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED BY VANESSA CORNWALL, LANE COUNTY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS MANAGER**