

**SB 1518 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

**Senate Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness**

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**Prepared By:** C. Ross, LPRO Analyst

**Meeting Dates:** 2/7, 2/12, 2/14

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Creates an exception for cemetery authorities to deviate from certain protocols that would otherwise apply to handling deceased persons, so they may respond to natural disasters that disturb human remains. Provides corresponding immunity from liability.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

**EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

*[-1 amendment]* Prohibits entities such as AAA from refusing emergency roadside assistance for subscribers on gravel surfaces.

*[-5 amendment]* Requires quarterly report from OMD through 2020, to Emergency Preparedness Committees on progress addressing certain deficiencies identified in audits.

*[-8 amendment]* Requires additional training exercises through the State Fire Marshall's office, for oil or other hazardous releases during rail transport; requires the Office of Emergency Management to meet with marine and rail operators to integrate them into state catastrophic emergency response plans and report back to the legislature; and requires multiple entities to work together to review and report on oil spill preparedness and response in Washington, California, and as per the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

*[-11 amendment]* Incorporates the content of the underlying bill, the -5 amendment, the -8 amendment, and adds a representative of the Department of Justice to the Homeland Security Council.

**BACKGROUND:**

The disposition of human remains is heavily regulated. In order to remove the remains of a deceased person from a plot, current law requires the written consent and approval of persons with decision-making authority over the remains, as well as the consent of the relevant cemetery authority. If consent cannot be obtained from persons with decision-making authority, an application may be filed in court with 60 days advance notice to the relevant cemetery authority and person. Similarly, disinterment and reinterment of human remains also requires authorization, typically from the State Registrar of the Center for Health Statistics, upon application by a funeral service practitioner.

In the event a natural disaster or similar emergency disturbs interred human remains, Senate Bill 1518 allows cemetery authorities to respond in specified ways after making reasonable efforts to notify persons with decision-making authority over the affected remains.

This Summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.