



Administration Office

# Rogue Valley Council of Governments

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February 3, 2020

Members of the Senate General Government & Emergency Preparedness Committee

Subject: Support for SB 1537

The Board of the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG)—an association of two counties, 15 cities, six special districts, and the region’s two institutions of higher learning in southern Oregon—would like to express its support for continued funding for the buildout and implementation of the ShakeAlert early warning system in Oregon.

Oregon is close to having the ability to institute a functioning earthquake early warning system that will allow us to mitigate the devastation and carnage of a major seismic event, but we are not yet there. It did appear that the needed funding would be approved during the 2019 legislative session, but ultimately that did not prove to be the case. Fortunately, this session’s Senate Bill 1537 gives us another opportunity to do right for our state and its citizens by providing funds for seismograph installation, as well as support for such other critical needs as enhanced public education of the “Two Weeks Ready” campaign, resources for dam safety inspections, and updating Oregon’s Resilience Plan.

We are highly committed to ShakeAlert not just because we live within easy reach of the Cascadia Subduction Zone, but also because we have become absolutely convinced of the value and efficacy of ShakeAlert. As a result, we, as a region, have become a willing and enthusiastic participant in the program’s early implementation process, and in fact the Rogue Valley Council of Governments was designated the first ShakeAlert “Facilitation Partner” within the State of Oregon. We already have more than two dozen public and private sector entities that have agreed to participate in the incorporation of the ShakeAlert technology within their organizations, among them Jackson and Josephine counties, the cities of Medford and Ashland, the region’s two 911 agencies, the Jackson County Library District, and Providence and Asante Hospitals.

The COG’s principal motivation in becoming involved was to positively impact the survivability of people and critical infrastructure during and following a major earthquake. This will be especially critical in southern Oregon, which is the most isolated of the State’s major population centers. The region is highly I-5 dependent, without any significant major alternative transportation routes, and far from any other urban areas in Oregon or northern California. As a result, Jackson and Josephine counties must become as resilient and self-reliant as possible. Being able to rely on ShakeAlert’s early warning capability and the other provision within SB 1537 will help us become more of a resource and less of a burden after a major Cascadia event.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our unified support for SB 1537. Please let us know if you need anything further from the Rogue Valley Council of Governments or its individual members to support your efforts to adequately fund ShakeAlert.

Sincerely,

Michael Cavallaro  
Executive Director

*The Rogue Valley Council of Governments is a voluntary association of these local governments and special districts in our region:*

- Jackson County
- Josephine County
- City of Ashland
- Town of Butte Falls
- City of Cave Junction
- City of Central Point
- City of Eagle Point
- City of Gold Hill
- City of Grants Pass
- City of Jacksonville
- City of Medford
- City of Phoenix
- City of Rogue River
- City of Shady Cove
- City of Talent
- Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon (ECSO)
- Jackson County Library District (JCLD)
- Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District
- Rogue Community College (RCC)
- Rogue Valley Sewer Services (RVS)
- Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD)
- Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc. (SOREDI)
- Southern Oregon University (SOU)