

HB 4044 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Rep. Tran

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Action Date: 02/08/24

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference.
(Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 5-2-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Conrad, Dexter, Evans, Grayber, Tran

Nays: 2 - Hieb, Lewis

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Beverly Schoonover, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/6, 2/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

This measure directs the Department of Environmental Quality to study and report on risks and issues relating to earthquake-induced toxic inhalation.

Detailed Summary

Directs the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to study risks and issues relating to earthquake-induced toxic inhalation. Requires DEQ to identify areas of concern and identify and report on highest-risk facilities within seismic risk zones. Requires the Department to model scenarios on potential impacts, including estimated total population at risk, and directs DEQ to complete a policy review of seismic requirements and mitigation programs in other jurisdictions. Allows the Department to consult, partner, or contract with appropriate entities. Requires DEQ to submit a report on the findings of the study to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to emergency management by December 1, 2024; allows DEQ to submit recommendations for legislation to interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to emergency management on or before March 1, 2025. Sunsets January 2, 2026. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Review of Multnomah County's study
- Discussion of the Environmental Protection Agency's Risk Management Program

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Clarifies the target parameters of the study, including identifying areas of concern, identifying and reporting on highest-risk facilities, requiring model scenarios on potential impacts, and completing a policy review of seismic requirements and mitigation programs in other jurisdictions. Requires DEQ to submit a report on the findings of the study to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to emergency management by December 1, 2024.

BACKGROUND:

Industrial facilities that store or handle hazardous materials (HAZMAT) could release toxic concentrations of evaporating petrochemicals as a result of fires expected to occur during and after a major earthquake.

“The Risk of Earthquake-Induced Hazardous Materials Releases in Multnomah County, Oregon: Two Scenarios Examined,” is a 2023 study conducted jointly by the Multnomah County Department of Emergency Management and Portland State University’s Institute of Sustainable Solutions. The study uses modeling to anticipate the impacts of seismically vulnerable HAZMAT facilities located near residential areas in Multnomah County. There

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are 70 industrial facilities in Multnomah County that store or handle such materials, and researchers in this study modeled four of the 70 facilities for potential release and dispersion patterns in the event of major seismic activity. That research estimated over 2,500 possible asphyxiation deaths from exposure, as well as thousands of possible injuries. Upon release of the report Multnomah County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson sent a letter to Governor Tina Kotek on October 12, 2023, sharing the study and asking that the State of Oregon engage “in identifying a swift and meaningful public policy response to a recently identified source of extreme public safety risk.”