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Tribes could earn emergency preparedness grants, under bill

HB 3376: Allows federally recognized tribes to compete for preparedness funding

SALEM – Tribal governments in Oregon already do a lot of the same emergency management work as counties and cities around the state, but they don't have access to all the same funding mechanisms.

[House Bill 3376](#) – which passed the Senate on a 28-0 vote today – helps address that issue by allowing federally recognized Indian tribes in the state to apply for emergency preparedness grants.

“Tribal governments have responsibility to take care of their people during times of emergency and disaster, and they should have access to the same resources as other entities that provide those services to other Oregonians,” said Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), who carried the bill on the Senate floor. “Including the tribes in this grant program will help them better prepare for and respond to emergency situations and disasters.”

The Oregon Legislature created the State Preparedness and Incident Response Equipment grant program in 2017. The program is administered by Oregon Emergency Management and assists local governments, special government bodies and private tax-exempt organizations with purchasing emergency preparedness equipment. Grant applications are considered based on demonstrated need, ability to keep and maintain the equipment, inventory process and commitment to partnership-based support. Equipment purchased through the program remains with the grant recipient for the duration of its useful life, unless it's reclaimed or repurposed.

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Board of Trustees Chairman Gary Burke submitted written testimony in favor of adding tribes to the list grant-eligible entities.

“The CTUIR coordinates regularly with Oregon Emergency Management on disaster planning, response, mitigation and recovery even though federally recognized tribes can make declaration directly to FEMA,” Burke wrote.” The CTUIR responders train and respond with local and regional responders and participate in several mutual aid agreements for emergency medical, emergency management, fire and law enforcement.”

House Bill 3376 now goes to Gov. Kate Brown for her signature.

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