



ASSEMBLY MEMBER

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DISTRICT 25

**AB 291**

*Local Emergency Preparedness  
and Hazard Mitigation Fund*

**SUMMARY**

AB 291 would establish an on-going statewide Local Emergency Preparedness and Hazard Mitigation Fund to support staffing, planning, and other emergency mitigation priorities to help local governments meet emergency preparedness goals and boost programs throughout the state that remain underfunded or neglected.

**BACKGROUND**

Disasters are local. Incidents impact local communities and require local resources, response, and management by local officials. Since 2013, California has had twelve major disaster Presidential declarations. Following two years of numerous significant disasters in California, there is a critical need to fund emergency management, preparedness, readiness, and resilience efforts at the local government level.

**PROBLEM**

While disasters have increased in number and severity, local government resources dedicated to emergency resilience, management, preparedness, and readiness have progressively diminished since 2003, primarily due to the recession and limited outside sources of funds.

Since 2003, there has been a significant reduction in dedicated emergency managers statewide and many emergency management programs have been transferred within local governments, or assigned to someone as an "extra responsibility." Furthermore, local governments have a backlog of critical emergency equipment including communications systems and up-to-date Emergency Operations Centers, and investment needs for mitigation projects like flood barriers.

**SOLUTION**

Scientific forecasts continue to predict major earthquake, flooding, and fire disasters in California's near future. At the same time as the probabilities of these threats are increasing, California's population is growing, and buildings are aging. The National Institute of Building Sciences found that investing in hazard mitigation measures can save the nation \$6 for every \$1 spent.

The Fund requested in AB 291 would distribute 60% of revenue to local jurisdictions on a per capita basis with minimum funding levels. The Fund allocates 25% to Operational Areas to establish a competitive grant process to support mitigation projects for the common benefit for two or more eligible local governments, and 15% for high risk zones with vulnerable populations. Local governments would be held accountable for use of the funds through public reports and plans. Strict guidelines would ensure that funds are being used in a cost-efficient and effective way, and local governments would have to demonstrate the ability to sustain local funding to qualify for state funds. Specifically, funding would support:

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### **Staffing for Planning & Community Resilience**

- Develop and maintain Emergency Operations Plans that account for disasters, including those resulting from climate change.
- Address emergency preparedness and response needs for the most vulnerable community members, including seniors and children.
- Train, recruit, and engage community members through the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program.

### **Mitigation**

- Retrofit structures for flood and seismic risk.
- Construct flood barriers and manage vegetation.

### **Facilities and Equipment**

- Develop and modernize critical facilities, such as Emergency Operations Centers.
- Purchase emergency management, preparedness, readiness, and resilience equipment.
- Develop and improve early warning systems.

### **SUPPORT**

League of California Cities

California Fire Chiefs Association

Fire Districts Association of California

California Emergency Services Association

City of San José

County of Santa Clara

California Tribal Business Alliance