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HOUSE BILL 1157

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State of Washington

61st Legislature

2009 Regular Session

By Representatives Anderson and Morris

Read first time 01/14/09. Referred to Committee on Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness.

1 AN ACT Relating to a statewide enhanced 911 emergency radio network  
2 to improve public notification during an ongoing emergency; and  
3 creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that there is an  
6 information gap between emergency organizations and the general public  
7 in the event of an ongoing emergency situation. The legislature  
8 further finds that the public would be better served by a network that  
9 would provide updated, regional information on the status of ongoing  
10 emergencies; what, if any, protective measures the public should take;  
11 and what resources are available. While providing information during  
12 an emergency is the primary concern, the same network would provide  
13 emergency preparedness and mitigation information before an emergency,  
14 and recovery and mitigation information after an emergency; all of  
15 which will contribute to making the public more prepared during an  
16 emergency response.

17 (2) The adjutant general shall establish a work group to study how  
18 to enhance the delivery of emergency information to the general public

1 in the event of an ongoing emergency. The work group shall consist, at  
2 a minimum, of the following members:

3 (a) Two representatives of the Washington state association of  
4 broadcasters, one representing radio broadcast and one representing  
5 television broadcast;

6 (b) A representative of the emergency alert system;

7 (c) A representative of the national weather service;

8 (d) A representative of the Washington military department  
9 emergency management division;

10 (e) A representative of a local emergency management organization;

11 (f) A representative from the 911 advisory committee;

12 (g) A representative from the office of the superintendent of  
13 public instruction;

14 (h) A representative from the field of higher education;

15 (i) A representative of the department of transportation; and

16 (j) Two members of a nonprofit, public policy organization  
17 comprised of chief executive officers from the business sector.

18 (3) The work group shall consider the following issues:

19 (a) How to create a multilayered, comprehensive, and renewable  
20 approach to delivering updated information in the event of an ongoing  
21 emergency to the general public;

22 (b) How to use existing alert systems, including but not limited to  
23 systems currently used by the state departments of ecology,  
24 transportation, agriculture, health, and social and health services,  
25 the Washington state patrol, and the state's institutions of higher  
26 education, to coordinate delivery of updated information in the event  
27 of an ongoing emergency;

28 (c) How to use the national oceanic and atmospheric administration  
29 (NOAA) weather radio system to coordinate delivery of updated  
30 information in the event of an ongoing emergency;

31 (d) How to create redundancies in the system to ensure that updated  
32 information in the event of an ongoing emergency will be available;

33 (e) How to improve coordination between the emergency alert system,  
34 NOAA weather radio, local broadcast stations, and other existing  
35 systems to ensure a seamless transfer of information to the public on  
36 an ongoing basis;

37 (f) How to take advantage of modes of communication beyond radio

1 and television, such as the internet, cell phone text messaging, and  
2 other new modes to add to the multilayering and redundancy of emergency  
3 messaging;

4 (g) How to integrate superintendent of public instruction  
5 notification systems in the emergency notification systems;

6 (h) How to implement the statewide emergency notification system to  
7 ensure its immediate availability to 911 public safety answering points  
8 for local notifications;

9 (i) How to ensure that utilization of the system includes specific  
10 information delivery to impacted elected officials; and

11 (j) What types of information the public needs the most in the  
12 aftermath of an emergency.

13 (4) By December 1, 2009, the adjutant general shall submit a report  
14 to the legislature and the governor indicating recommendations for the  
15 delivery of emergency information to the public.

16 (5) The definitions in RCW 38.52.010 apply throughout this section.

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