
HOUSE BILL 1810

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Donaghy, Reeves, Walen, Ramel, Bernbaum, Low, and Reed

1 AN ACT Relating to seismic hazard risk reduction; creating new
2 sections; and providing expiration dates.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that Washington has
5 the second highest earthquake risk in the United States. A major
6 seismic event will result in loss of life and injury due to
7 structural collapse. The state has an 86 percent chance of
8 experiencing a damaging earthquake between now and the next 50 years.
9 A damaging earthquake will happen during our lifetime, and we are
10 unprepared. The seismic retrofit of collapse-prone buildings is
11 critical for ensuring the safety of our citizens and reducing
12 economic disruption. Unreinforced masonry buildings, classic red
13 brick buildings of common construction prior to World War II, were
14 built for their fire resistance and are at risk of collapse in an
15 earthquake due to their lack of reinforcing steel and inadequate
16 connections. A full or partial collapse of these structures is
17 significantly reduced by conducting seismic retrofits, bracing
18 parapets, and strengthening connections between the floors, walls,
19 and roof.

20 The legislature further finds that supporting the identification
21 and earthquake retrofit of unreinforced masonry buildings will

1 increase public safety in the event of an earthquake, reducing
2 deaths, injuries, property damages, displacement, and economic
3 disruption.

4 The legislature further finds that financial resources are needed
5 to assist owners of unreinforced masonry buildings in conducting
6 these lifesaving earthquake retrofits. Local jurisdictions have been
7 unable to mandate the retrofit of these vulnerable structures, citing
8 the economic unviability it poses for building owners who will be
9 forced to pass costs along to tenants, decreasing the already limited
10 stock of affordable housing.

11 Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to support public
12 safety, earthquake readiness, and affordable housing by identifying
13 feasible opportunities to reduce the financial burden associated with
14 conducting seismic retrofits of unreinforced masonry buildings.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts
16 appropriated for this specific purpose, the department of commerce
17 must conduct a study regarding financial incentives to reduce the
18 financial burden associated with the seismic retrofit of unreinforced
19 masonry buildings.

20 (2) The study must, at a minimum, include impact analysis and
21 policy recommendations for:

22 (a) The modification and expansion of the special valuation tax;

23 (b) The expansion of current use taxation;

24 (c) Opportunities for time-limited exemptions under state
25 property tax, excise tax, sales tax, business and occupation tax, or
26 other tax structures;

27 (d) The use of valuation of special assessments and assessment
28 zones; and

29 (e) The identification of financial incentives for tax-exempt
30 entities, such as schools, nonprofits, and religious organizations.

31 (3) The department of commerce must request input from the state
32 association of county assessors, American institute of architects
33 Washington chapter, structural engineers association of Washington,
34 the department of revenue, and the joint legislative audit and review
35 committee.

36 (4) The department of commerce must submit a preliminary report
37 on the outcomes of the completed study to the appropriate committees
38 of the legislature by June 30, 2026, and a final report must be
39 submitted by September 1, 2026. The report must also include policy

1 recommendations relating to financial incentives for the retrofit of
2 unreinforced masonry buildings.

3 (5) This section expires December 31, 2026.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Subject to the availability of amounts
5 appropriated for this specific purpose, the emergency management
6 division of the Washington military department must complete the
7 inventory and categorization of unreinforced masonry buildings in
8 Washington, as directed in section 1009, chapter 298, Laws of 2018.

9 (2) The inventory must include:

10 (a) Review of existing survey and data sources, including the
11 state's historic resources database and Sanborn maps to identify and
12 confirm unreinforced masonry construction;

13 (b) Ground truthing of suspected unreinforced masonry to confirm
14 construction type and vulnerability; and

15 (c) Upload unreinforced masonry data into the Washington system
16 for architectural and archaeological records data portal and
17 dashboard to enable local jurisdictions to view, download, and use to
18 guide unreinforced masonry retrofit efforts, hazard mitigation plans,
19 and emergency management plans.

20 (3) The emergency management division of the Washington military
21 department must submit a preliminary report on the progress of the
22 completed inventory to the appropriate committees of the legislature
23 by September 1, 2027. The statewide unreinforced masonry inventory
24 must be completed by June 30, 2030.

25 (4) This section expires December 31, 2030.

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