**Washington State**
**House of Representatives**
**Office of Program Research**

**BILL ANALYSIS**

# Community & Economic Development Committee

# HB 1340

**Brief Description:** Concerning creation of the statewide pandemic preparation and response task force.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Lovick, Harris, Fitzgibbon, Ryu, Taylor, Wicks, Dolan, Ramel, Valdez, Leavitt, Goodman, Johnson, J., Chopp, Orwall, Santos, Peterson, Gregerson, Shewmake, Davis, Ormsby, Berg, Bronoske, Duerr, Fey, Bateman, Lekanoff, Senn, Callan, Frame, Pollet, Harris-Talley and Macri.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Establishes the Statewide Pandemic Preparation and Response Task Force (Task Force).
- Requires the Task Force to report its finding and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature by July 1, 2022.

**Hearing Date:** 2/2/21

**Staff:** Cassie Jones (786-7303).

**Background:**

The Washington Military Department, under the direction of the Adjutant General, administers the state's comprehensive program of emergency management. The Adjutant General is responsible for developing a comprehensive, all-hazard emergency plan for the state, known as the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, that includes an analysis of natural, technological, or human-caused hazards, and procedures to coordinate local and state resources in responding to such hazards.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

During state emergencies, the Emergency Management Division of the Military Department manages the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and coordinates the response to ensure help is provided to those who need it quickly and effectively. The EOC is designated as the central location for information gathering, disaster analysis, and response coordination. Other state agencies with emergency roles may come to the EOC to help coordinate the state response. Federal government agencies, along with state and local volunteer organizations, also may provide representatives. At the EOC, information gathered is used to make decisions concerning emergency actions and to identify and prioritize the use of state resources needed to respond to the emergency. The EOC may issue emergency warnings or disseminate critical information and instructions to government personnel and the public who may need to take emergency protective actions.

**Summary of Bill:**

A Task Force on statewide pandemic preparation and response is established. The Task Force is composed of the following members:

- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- the Secretary of the Department of Health, or the Secretary's designee;
- the Adjutant General of the Military Department, or the Adjutant General's designee;
- the Commissioner of the Employment Security Department, or the Commissioner's designee;
- the Director of the Department of Financial Institutions, or the Director's designee;
- the Insurance Commissioner, or the Commissioner's designee;
- the Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services, or the Secretary's designee;
- the Superintendent of Public Instruction, or the Superintendent's designee;
- the Director of the Department of Labor and Industries, or the Director's designee;
- the executive Director of the Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission, or the executive Director's designee;
- one member representing the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs; and
- one member representing each of the following, to be appointed by the Governor:
    - the Office of the Governor;
    - the association of Washington cities;
    - the Washington association of counties;
    - emergency and transitional housing providers;
    - a statewide association representing physicians;
    - a statewide association representing nurses;
    - a statewide association representing hospitals;
    - local public health officials; and
    - local emergency management agencies.

The Task Force must consult with owners of small businesses, epidemiologists, and representatives of immigrant communities. The Adjutant General, or the Adjutant General's designee, and the Secretary of the Department of Health, or the Secretary's designee, must cochair the Task Force and convene its initial meeting. Staff support to the Task Force must be provided by the Military Department.

The Task Force must study and make recommendations regarding a broad array of issues related to pandemic preparation and response, including: (1) developing strategies to facilitate a coordinated response by the health system; (2) establishing protections for the business community and workers during a pandemic; (3) implementing standards regarding flexible rent and repayment plans; (4) establishing a multidisciplinary team of experts to manage a coordinated and comprehensive statewide response; (5) implementing other listed emergency preparedness strategies; (6) developing strategies to increase healthcare capacity; (7) developing strategies to monitor, track, and control positive and presumptive cases; (8) implementing guidelines for school closures; and (9) establishing new revenue sources for funding pandemic preparation and response efforts.

The Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by July 1, 2022.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 28, 2021.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.