Technology, Economic Development, and Veterans Committee

Update on Tsunami Risk and Resilience

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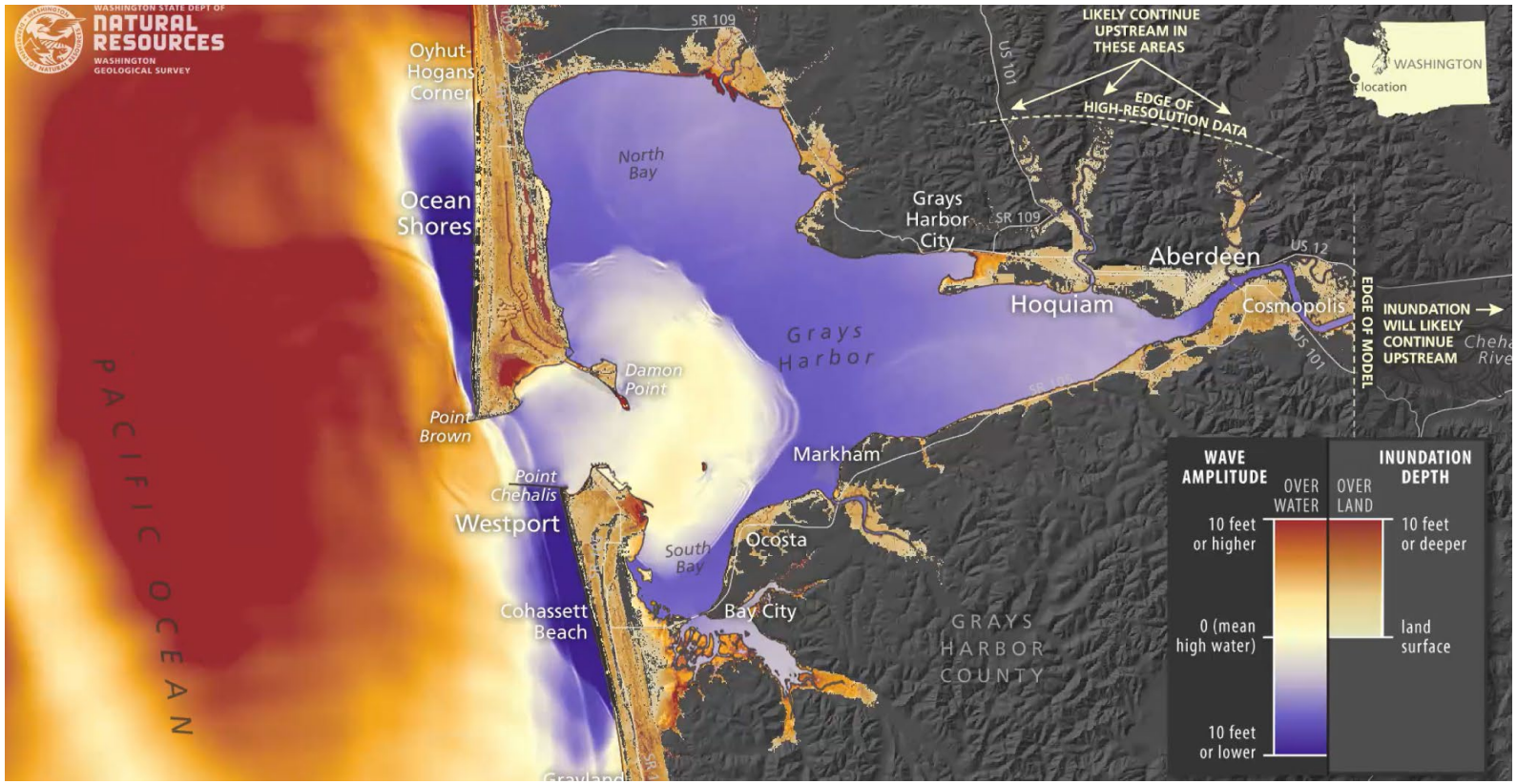
December 5, 2025

Washington State Tsunami Risk

- WA has one of the highest tsunami risks in the nation
- 300,000 people live, work, and recreate in our tsunami hazard zone
- Cascadia Subduction Zone:
  - Most catastrophic natural hazard the US faces
  - 10-30% chance in the next 50 years



We could experience more than *50,000 casualties*



How do we save lives?

Tsunami Vertical Evacuation Structures

- Tsunami vertical evacuation structures (VES) bring high ground to communities; saved thousands of lives in the 2011 tsunami
- WA has 2 VES currently and needs at least 58-80+ more
- VES needs assessment identifies potential VES locations
- Manual for Tsunami Vertical Evacuation Structures guides communities through the VES process
- Tsunami VES Project Manager position (FEMA BRIC funded) provides subject matter expertise to local communities

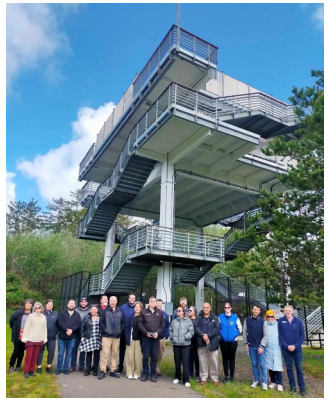


Other Tsunami Resilience Efforts

- Tsunami maritime response and mitigation strategies for key ports and marinas
- Exercises with local, state, tribal, and federal partners to test alerting procedures
- Evacuation wayfinding (tsunami signs, maps, route maintenance)
- Education and outreach materials, in-person and virtual events, and social media








Funding Barriers

- The WA Tsunami Program within the Disaster Resilience Unit relies entirely on federal grant funding through NOAA and FEMA that has either been cancelled or is currently in jeopardy
- Without this funding, local communities can't build resilience, and we lose our ability to support tsunami education and outreach, mitigation, alerting, and response across the state

State-level support and advocacy are vital to closing this gap and saving lives in the next catastrophic earthquake and tsunami