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Understanding Earthquake and Tsunami Hazards

2016 Supplemental Budget Request



◀ Earthquakes and tsunamis, like the Tohoku tsunami pictured at left, inflict billions of dollars of damage around the world. Identifying potential destruction before disasters hit could minimize the damage done when a tsunami strikes Washington. (Flickr Creative Commons)



Schools in coastal communities like the Ocosta School in Westport need help planning for tsunamis.

Accurately mapping faults allows communities to identify and plan for potential disasters.

Background

Washington's communities are vulnerable to catastrophic damage from earthquakes and tsunamis, yet little reliable information about those threats currently exists.

The Federal Emergency Management Administration estimates a large Cascadia subduction zone earthquake and tsunami would cause more than \$50 billion in damages and more than 10,000 deaths in Washington state.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources is asking for an investment of \$547,000 to map earthquake and tsunami hazards and ensure the public receives that information.

This summer's *New Yorker* article about a Cascadia subduction zone earthquake and tsunami shows how much Washington residents are concerned about these threats. Reports that "everything west of Interstate 5 will be toast" generated widespread interest in how the offshore fault might impact homes and communities. This proposal would give Washington's citizens specific information about those impacts.

Better information can help our citizens be prepared, not scared.

According to the geologic record, the Cascadia subduction zone has produced earthquakes of magnitude 9 or greater approximately every 200 to 600 years. The last was Jan. 26, 1700. The Seattle Fault and the southern Whidbey Island fault zone also threaten large population centers.

Counties, cities, tribes and state agencies are responsible for protecting their communities and responding quickly when disasters strike. To do so, they need to know beforehand the location of active faults; where ground could liquefy in an earthquake; where tsunami waves might impact, and other hazards.



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