



WASHINGTON STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION



SR 530 LANDSLIDE COMMISSION

BY THE NUMBERS

- 12 members appointed to the commission.
- 11 meetings held.
- 17 recommendations developed by commission.
- Legislation (SB 5088) passed and signed by Governor Inslee provides \$4.6 million to the Department of Natural Resources to develop a database of lidar maps of landslide-prone areas.
- Legislation (HB 1389) passed and signed, clarifies the state's fire service mobilization law.

2016 ISSUE

In July 2014 Washington Governor Jay Inslee and Snohomish County Executive John Lovick appointed a joint commission to assess the response to the March 2014 SR 530 Landslide that took the lives of 43 people in the Stillaguamish Valley. The SR 530 Landslide Commission was tasked with reviewing the emergency response to the slide and identifying lessons learned and policy recommendations to help make Washington safer and enhance the ability to respond to similar events. The William D. Ruckelshaus Center (Ruckelshaus Center) and WSU Division of Governmental Studies and Services (DGSS) facilitated the Commission.

RESPONSE

In July 2014 The Ruckelshaus Center met with representatives from Governor Inslee's and County Executive Lovick's offices to better understand goals and expected outcomes of the anticipated Commission, develop a scope of work, and assemble a facilitation team. DGSS Director Mike Gaffney and Ruckelshaus Center Project and Research Specialist Amanda Murphy served as co-facilitators to the Commission. Governor Inslee and County Executive Lovick asked regional business leader Kathy Lombardo to serve as executive director of the Commission. The Commission operated independently, and did not examine liability, cause or fault, or act as a substitute for the courts in any way.

Between August and December 2014, the Ruckelshaus Center and DGSS facilitated 11 meetings of the Commission, helping it reach consensus on 17 recommendations and produce a final report for the governor and county executive. The Commission identified three recommendations as critical first steps: 1) more mapping of potential hazards areas; 2) better funding and integration of the state's emergency management system; and 3) more clarity to laws for mobilizing first responders.



QUOTES

“On behalf of all Washingtonians I want to thank the members and staff of SR 530 Landslide Commission for their dedication and hard work on this very important effort. ... The commission did its work in a thoughtful, fair, compassionate and transparent way and produced a report of important recommendations. The work of the commission will help make us all safer in the future.” – Washington State Governor Jay Inslee

“It wasn’t just a commission going through a bunch of policies and coming up with recommendations. We really tried to understand the heartbreak and the human conditions. It was very humbling for me, personally.” – SR 530 Landslide Commissioner Bill Trimm (Mudslide Report Offers Ideas to be Ready for Next Disaster, 12/15/14 HeraldNet)

“On behalf of myself and the community of Darrington, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.” - Darrington Town Councilman Kevin Ashe, in remarks to the SR 530 Landslide Commission. (Panel investigating Oso lessons needs more time, 12/3/14 HeraldNet)

IMPACTS

The Commission submitted its final report to Governor Inslee and County Executive Lovick on December 15, 2014. Those leaders, as well as legislators, members of the affected communities, and the media praised the report. Following release of the report, Governor Inslee announced he would include as part of his transportation investment package \$36 million for hazard mapping and landslide mitigation measures. The governor also has set aside money in his proposed operating budget for a Hazard Identification Institute, which would be a repository for geological hazard information in the state of Washington.

In February 2015, the National Research Council Board on Earth Sciences convened a workshop of landslide and risk experts at the University of Washington to examine progress in reducing landslide risk. Speakers from several state and county agencies provided their perspectives on landslide hazards programs and emphasized the need for the application of new technologies (e.g. lidar and InSAR) in Washington to support land-use planning and zoning for landslide hazards.

State lawmakers worked to enact recommendations made by the commission. The Senate and House unanimously approved a bill (SB 5088) to allow the Department of Natural Resources to develop a database of lidar maps of landslide-prone areas in the state. The bill, signed by the governor on April 17, represents one of the first major policy changes inspired by the recommendations of the Landslide Commission. The Senate and House also passed a bill (HB 1389) clarifying that under the state’s fire service mobilization law, firefighting resources can be mobilized for non-fire emergencies.