



# Whatcom County

COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105  
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038  
(360) 778-5010

## Agenda Bill Master Report

File Number: AB2026-129

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**File ID:** AB2026-129      **Version:** 1      **Status:** Substitute Approved  
**File Created:** 01/28/2026      **Entered by:** CHalka@co.whatcom.wa.us  
**Department:** Council Office      **File Type:** Resolution  
**Assigned to:** Council Public Works & Health Committee      **Final Action:** 02/10/2026  
**Agenda Date:** 02/10/2026      **Enactment #:** RES 2026-006  
**Related Files:**

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Primary Contact Email: jgermand@co.whatcom.wa.us

### TITLE FOR AGENDA ITEM:

Resolution requesting Washington State officials and Whatcom County's Congressional delegation work to secure the release of approved Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds for Whatcom County homeowners

### SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE:

None

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### HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE FILE

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Date:	Acting Body:	Action:	Sent To:
02/10/2026	Council Public Works & Health Committee	RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL Aye: 7 Nay: 0	Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremier
02/10/2026	Council	SUBSTITUTE APPROVED Aye: 7 Nay: 0	Boyle, Buchanan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Rienstra, Scanlon, and Stremier

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**Attachments:** Proposed Resolution, Substitute Resolution

**RESOLUTION NO. 2026-006**

**REQUESTING WASHINGTON STATE OFFICIALS AND WHATCOM COUNTY'S  
CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION WORK TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF APPROVED  
HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM FUNDS FOR WHATCOM COUNTY  
HOMEOWNERS**

**WHEREAS**, in November 2021, Whatcom County experienced historic floods, which displaced numerous county residents and resulted in significant damages to homes, businesses, and infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides funding to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to help communities rebuild in ways that reduce or mitigate future disaster losses; and

**WHEREAS**, Whatcom County is eligible to receive HMGP funding through FEMA Federally Declared Disaster Number DR-4635-WA; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to the November 2021 flooding, the Whatcom County River and Flood Division worked with the small cities of Everson, Ferndale, and Sumas to identify and prioritize flood-damaged properties throughout the County for mitigation assistance and evaluate eligibility for acquisition or elevation funding through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program; and

**WHEREAS**, FEMA-funded property acquisitions allow local jurisdictions such as Whatcom County to purchase eligible properties in flood-prone areas from willing sellers for conversion to open space and conservation of natural floodplain functions; and

**WHEREAS**, home elevations are a tool that can be used to mitigate flooding and increase resiliency for property owners who do not wish to leave their homes and desire to stay in their communities; and

**WHEREAS**, in April 2022, the Whatcom County Flood Control Zone District (FCZD) submitted application 4635-01-R for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding to elevate a total of 12 properties in Sumas, Ferndale, and unincorporated Whatcom County that were substantially damaged during the 2021 flood; and

**WHEREAS**, the Whatcom County FCZD submitted two additional applications (4635-02-R Elevation and 4635-03-R Acquisition) for HMGP funding in August 2022 to acquire five properties and elevate 16 additional properties at high risk for repeated flooding in Sumas, Ferndale, and unincorporated Whatcom County; and

**WHEREAS**, FEMA approved Whatcom County's April 2022 grant application (4635-01-R), allowing elevations to move forward for the selected properties; and

**WHEREAS**, the August 2022 grant applications have been approved by both the Washington Emergency Management Division (WEMD), which administers HMGP grant agreements, and FEMA; and

**WHEREAS**, despite these approvals from WEMD and FEMA, funding for the remaining property acquisitions and elevations remains stalled due to a new requirement that all grants over \$100,000 must receive final authorization from the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security; and

**WHEREAS**, more than four years have elapsed since the 2021 floods, and Whatcom County families are still waiting to receive aid needed to protect their homes from future flooding impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, the period of performance for Federally Declared Disaster Number DR-4635-WA ends April 5, 2026; and

**WHEREAS**, WEMD requested an extension of the timeline on Whatcom County's behalf, but that request has not yet been granted; and

**WHEREAS**, while funding for the home elevations has remained stalled, Whatcom County experienced another round of devastating floods in December 2025, causing additional damages, emotional distress, and financial strain for homeowners who never fully recovered from the 2021 floods; and

**WHEREAS**, lengthy administrative delays in the distribution of disaster recovery funds unnecessarily prolong the suffering of families trying to rebuild and recover from a declared emergency and leaves them vulnerable to additional, preventable harms, including further flooding.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Whatcom County Council respectfully requests that the Washington State Governor and Attorney General employ all available legal means to secure the immediate release of HMGP funds for Whatcom County grant applications 4635-02-R and 4635-03-R; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Whatcom County Council respectfully requests that Washington's United States Senators, Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, and Washington's Second Congressional District Representative, Rick Larsen, work to secure the immediate release of the same.

**APPROVED** this 10th day of February, 2026

ATTEST:

  
Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Kaylee Galloway  
Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Kimberly Thulin via email 2.2.2026 (JG)  
Civil Deputy Prosecutor