

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**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.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2026

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Civil Deputy Prosecutor