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Administered By

**Jenkins Management Solutions,
LLC** (Olympia, Washington)

February 09, 2022

To: City Mayors

From: Kurt Aldworth, President

Re: Inter-jurisdictional Mutual Aid and Building Safety Evaluations

Disasters such as earthquakes, fires, and floods can happen anytime and anywhere, leaving communities large and small reeling from their effects. To assist Washington communities to meet their obligations in responding to and recovering from disasters, the Washington Association of Building Officials (WABO) took on the task of preparing the State's building safety agencies to assist each other. Toward that end, WABO championed ESHB 1406, the Washington Building Safety Mutual Aid System during the 2011 Washington Legislature and it passed unanimously.

This legislation created RCW 24.60, which enables building departments across the State to support each other in the event of an emergency impacting a jurisdiction's ability to provide essential building safety services. WABO, recognizing the often limited staff levels of building departments, crafted the language in the RCW to allow resource sharing not only in a declared disaster, but also in other emergencies. Under the RCW, all Washington jurisdictions are eligible to participate if they choose to, so separate jurisdiction-to-jurisdiction agreements are unnecessary. RCW 24.60 has no impact on existing programs such as the State fire mobilization system. Reimbursement is left to the discretion of the requesting and responding jurisdictions.

In order to assist jurisdictions with the program, WABO has created an **All Hazards Mutual Aid Tool Kit**. The tool kit is a collection of virtual resources including background information, legal documents, FEMA guidance, templates, and other resources to assist building safety agencies and their jurisdictions with implementation of the building safety mutual aid system. Jurisdictions may access the tool kit and the free resources it provides through the WABO web site at www.wabo.org.

In addition, WABO's Emergency Management committee has been working with other non-governmental organizations to develop a statewide building safety responder program. Through their efforts WAsafe (**W**ashington **S**afety **A**ssessment of **F**acilities **E**valuators) was formed. WAsafe is a coalition comprised of WABO, Structural Engineers Association of Washington (SEAW), The American Institute of Architects - Washington Council (AIA|WA), and American Society of Civil Engineers - Seattle Section (ASCE) whose mission is to train, enroll, and aid in the dispatch of volunteer building safety evaluators **to help local building officials** in Washington respond to disasters. After the next disaster strikes, individuals who are approved in advance will be available to assist with building safety evaluations. This will help get people back in their homes and businesses as soon as possible. We encourage members of your building department to become credentialed so they can assist their neighbors.

For further information on RCW 24.60 or building safety evaluations, please contact your local building official or the Washington Association of Building Officials at 360-628-8669.

Sincerely,

Kurt Aldworth, CBO, ACO
WABO President