

Federal Update on Emergency Management

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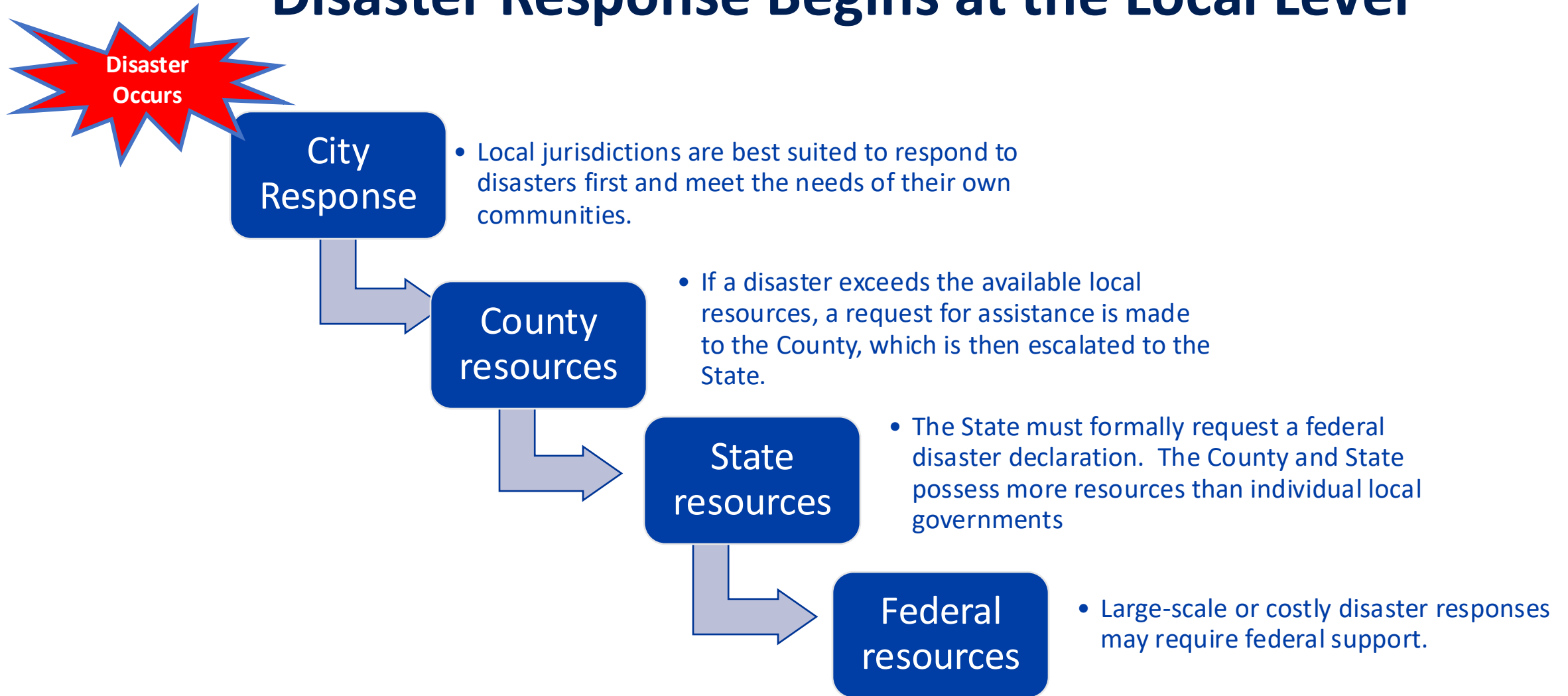
August 15, 2025

Seattle Office of Emergency Management



City of Seattle

Disaster Response Begins at the Local Level



Changes to Federal Disaster Funding are Substantive

Previous Federal Assistance	New Federal Assistance (Proposed)
Presidential Declarations and post-incident funding only applied when the damage threshold met of \$1.89 per capita was met. The Washington State threshold was \$14.5 million.	Presidential Declarations only apply if \$7.56 per capita is met, which represents a fourfold increase. In Washington, this threshold amounts to \$58 million.
Cities could receive direct Federal Assistance in the form of staff, resources, and specialty services; e.g. field hospital, COVID reimbursement (Seattle \$30 million).	Uncertain level of Federal Assistance.
Decision support before weather incidents; National Weather Service.	Little to no support before weather incidents.

Federal Emergency: What we know

- The federal government has outlined new terms and conditions to receive grant funds that may make Seattle ineligible.
- Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) funds may not be available for Seattle for this calendar year.
- Some FEMA classes restored.
- Political and **legal** landscape shifts regularly

Effect to Seattle: Bomb Cyclone

- Washington State's request for a federal declaration denied (Bomb Cyclone)
- Seattle sustained over \$7.4 million of damages
- State's claim exceeded damage threshold of \$14.5 million
- Denial appealed – Appeal also denied
- All disaster damage now responsibility of Seattle



Federal Changes Affect Regional Emergency Preparedness



Working together to find disaster mitigation & recovery funding alternatives



State Emergency Management (WA EMD) hosting meetings with all WA jurisdictions to discuss funding alternative supports



Continued collaboration such as with an upcoming FIFA exercise

What's Next for Congress

- **Prior to August recess, the House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) introduced H.R. 4669/Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025.**
 - This is bi-partisan legislation intending to restore the agency's status as a cabinet level agency and streamline federal disaster response.
- **Concurrently, Secretary Kristi Noem (DHS) and Sec. Pete Hegseth (DoD), are leading the President's FEMA Review Council.**
 - This was established under President Trump's executive order "Council to Assess the Federal Emergency Management Agency" in January of 2025.
 - The administration has signaled it does not seek to elevate FEMA to the President's Cabinet, which is unaligned with the T&I Committee.
- The House and Senate continue to work on their respective FY2026 appropriations bills. Given Homeland Security funding bill's jurisdiction over immigration and border security programs, it will face political headwind.

Questions?

