



TACIR INSIGHT

TENNESSEE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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COLLABORATING TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY RESILIENCY TO NATURAL DISASTERS

Background

The Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations report was prepared in response to Senate Bill 1114 by Senator Jeff Yarbrow and House Bill 1120 by Representative Bob Freeman in the 111th General Assembly, which was referred by the House State Committee. The sponsors requested that the Commission specifically

- identify risks for extreme weather events and earthquakes across the state,
- document the current status of planning to reduce the effects of these specific natural disasters and build community resilience in Tennessee at the state and local level,
- identify best practices for building community resilience, and
- determine the cost of action and inaction.

Findings and Recommendations

The report finds that from 1996 to 2018 in Tennessee, there was an average of \$343.5 million annually in property damage and economic losses resulting from natural disasters, according to analysis by 3 Sigma Consultants, LLC—the consulting firm the Commission contracted with to analyze past and future extreme weather events and earthquakes. Based on 3 Sigma’s analysis, Tennessee could see the annual cost of natural disasters nearly double to \$595 million per year by 2055. The good news is that local governments and state agencies are already working together to reduce the costs of natural disasters with hazard mitigation strategies, which aim to lessen physical vulnerabilities.

Additionally, local governments and state agencies are also partnering on broader community resilience efforts that go beyond hazard mitigation to reduce social and economic vulnerabilities in Tennessee.

Because Tennessee local governments and state agencies are implementing strategies to prepare for, withstand, and rapidly recover from disruptions to everyday life, and because interagency collaboration is already occurring, the state should ensure the ongoing resilience efforts continue—including collaboration among state agencies and local governments. The Commission takes no position on the exact structure of these collaborative efforts, but they should include a focus on community resilience planning features such as assessing social and economic vulnerabilities and engaging community members in the decision-making process in addition to hazard mitigation strategies.