



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #542

Emergency Management Initiative (Military Affairs)

[LFB 2009-11 Budget Summary: Page 445, #8]

CURRENT LAW

Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) under the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) is responsible for coordinating the state's response to natural and man-made disasters. Wisconsin Emergency Management works with state agencies, local units of government, volunteer agencies and the private sector in carrying out its responsibilities under the four phases of emergency management: (a) mitigation (identifying possible hazards and eliminating or reducing the risks posed by those hazards); (b) preparedness (developing response plans for possible emergencies, conducting training and exercises, and identifying resources that would be needed for possible emergency scenarios); (c) response (initial response of state and local government to a natural or man-made disaster); and (d) recovery (assisting individuals, businesses, and governmental units to repair and rebuild following a disaster). The 2008-09 adjusted base budget for WEM is \$27,838,600 (\$18,371,000 FED, \$4,854,500 PR, \$4,138,600 GPR, and \$474,500 SEG) and 64.55 positions (37.29 PR, 18.38 FED, and 8.88 GPR).

GOVERNOR

Provide \$114,900 SEG and 2.0 positions annually (1.0 FED and 1.0 SEG position) to assist WEM in carrying out its responsibilities under the four phases of emergency management. The position authority and associated funding would be utilized to create an additional regional director as well as a public information officer assistant.

Create the "division of emergency management operations; petroleum inspection fund" SEG appropriation, authorizing DMA to expend provided expenditure authority for the general program operations of WEM. Funding for the appropriation would be provided from the petroleum inspection fund.

The federal funding for the initiative would come from the federal Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) Program. The bill does not provide additional expenditure authority to expend federal funding.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Southwest Region Director

1. Under the bill, WEM would be provided position authority for a 1.0 SEG Southwest Region Director funded by petroleum inspection fund revenues totaling \$114,900 SEG annually. In order to permit WEM to receive and expend petroleum inspection fund revenues for this purpose, AB 75 also creates the "division of emergency management operations; petroleum inspection fund" SEG appropriation, authorizing WEM to expend provided expenditure authority for its general program operations.

2. Emergency Management has divided the state into six regions. The staff at WEM indicates that only the Southwest Region does not have a dedicated regional director. Instead, the Response Section Supervisor also serves as the regional director for the Southwest Region. The Southwest Region includes the following 13 counties (Adams, Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Grant, Green, Iowa, Juneau, Lafayette, Richland, Rock, Sauk, and Vernon).

3. The Department indicates that, "All Wisconsin Emergency Management Regions are important and require the daily attention of a singularly dedicated Region Director to develop relationships and work with County Directors on preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation efforts to meet the increased state and federal requirement[s]." The intent of the recommendation would be to permit the Department to provide the same level of support to the Southwest Region that other regions in the state receive.

4. In recognition of the reduced resources currently provided to the Southwest Region, the Committee could approve the creation of a Southwest Region Director. Alternatively, the Committee could maintain current staffing levels. Under this alternative, it would be the responsibility of WEM to utilize its existing resources to serve all six regions, perhaps by requiring the other regional directors to assist the Response Section Supervisor in meeting the needs of the Southwest Region.

Public Information Officer Assistant

5. Under the bill, WEM would also be provided a 1.0 FED public information officer (PIO) assistant. The administration indicates that the intent is that this position would be funded with federal funds under the EMPG program. While additional federal expenditure authority is not provided, WEM estimates that it will need \$56,800 FED annually to fund the position.

6. Under its internal operations procedures, WEM requires that its PIO be at the state emergency operations center even when it is activated at the lowest activation level. If its PIO is

unavailable, or if the shift is longer than 12 hours, WEM's PIO must find a backup to serve as PIO from other state agencies. Emergency Management has indicated that from January through mid-September, 2008, the state emergency operations center was activated 12 times, including the flooding in June of 2008, when it was activated for 24 days. Creating a PIO assistant would provide WEM more resources to manage the PIO function internally during emergency activations of the state emergency operations center, thereby reducing its need to coordinate backups with other state agencies.

7. Emergency Management further indicates that the Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) Program has also increased the need for a PIO assistant. While in the past, two exercises were held a year under this program, this has recently increased to five. Emergency Management staff indicates that during these exercises a PIO must be provided by WEM for both Wisconsin's emergency operations center, as well as for the joint information center in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota. [Under the REP program, WEM is responsible for working with other federal, state, and local officials, as well as utility company representatives, to develop emergency response plans in relation to three nuclear power plants, two in Wisconsin and one in Minnesota across the Mississippi River from Wisconsin.]

8. According to WEM, the PIO assistant would also assist the WEM PIO in training first responders across the state on providing public information.

9. Based on this discussion of need, the Committee could consider providing WEM a PIO assistant. Alternatively, the Committee could deny the request. If the request is denied, WEM would need to continue to coordinate with other state agencies to provide required PIO services during peak demand periods (during emergency operation center activations and during required exercises).

Public Assistance Officer

10. While the Department believes that the creation of a Southwest Region Director would improve its ability to carry out its emergency management responsibilities, DMA staff indicates that a more pressing need exists in creating an additional public assistance officer, which was not included under the provisions of AB 75, as introduced. Emergency Management staff indicates that the existing 2.0 public assistance officers require additional assistance to timely address their workload.

11. The duties of the position include processing damage and reimbursement claims following a presidential disaster declaration under federal law, as well as processing payment claims under the state's major disaster assistance program. Federal disaster programs administered by WEM provide funds to state agencies and local units of government to compensate them for costs incurred to respond to disasters and to repair damage to essential public facilities.

12. The state program makes payments to local units of government for their damages and costs incurred as the result of a "major catastrophe" if federal disaster assistance is not available

for that catastrophe because: (a) the Governor's request that the President declare the catastrophe a major disaster under federal law has been denied; or (b) the disaster does not meet the statewide or countywide per capita minimum threshold for damage under the public assistance program that is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). A local unit of government is only eligible to receive payments under the program if it pays 30% of the amount of its damages and costs incurred as the result of a natural disaster. A "major catastrophe" is defined as a disaster including a drought, earthquake, flood, high water, high wind, hurricane, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, or tornado, that results in the Governor requesting a presidential declaration of a major disaster under federal law. Eligible costs of local units of government under the state program include: (a) debris removal, to include woody debris, building wreckage, dirt, gravel, vehicles, and other disaster-related materials; (b) emergency protective measures to eliminate or reduce immediate threats to life, public health, or safety or a hazard that threatens significant damage to improved public or private property; and (c) damages to roads and bridges, to include surfaces, bases, shoulders, ditches, drainage structures, piers, girders, abutments, slope protection, and approaches. The state disaster assistance program was created under 2005 Wisconsin Act 269, but no additional resources were provided to WEM to administer the program.

13. Emergency Management staff indicate that the existing 2.0 public assistance officers are currently administering claims under seven presidential disaster declarations dating back to 2000. It can take approximately five to six years to administer a presidential disaster declaration and can involve anywhere from 100 to 800 local government applicants, many or all of whom may receive multiple payments.

14. "To further embellish on this workload, for the 2007 flood disaster there were 142 applicants who had 664 projects to be processed. For the snow disaster there were 473 applicants with an equal number of projects. For the 2008 floods with 858 applicants there are 3,104 projects to be processed. Each one of these projects requires an eligibility review, generation of paperwork, follow-up activities with the applicant, quarterly reporting to FEMA and close-out activities. Applicants also have the opportunity to appeal decisions they do not agree with."

15. Emergency Management staff indicate that processing claims under the state's major disaster assistance program is equally labor intensive. Without additional staff, WEM indicates that local governments will experience delays in receiving assistance and resolving claims under these programs.

16. Based on this discussion of need, the Committee could consider providing WEM an additional 1.0 public assistance officer. Alternatively, the Committee could take no action regarding this request. As a result, WEM would need to continue to make use of limited-term-employees (LTEs) to assist the existing public assistance officers in processing this workload. Emergency Management staff indicates that the limitation with LTEs is that by the time they develop proficiency with their job duties and responsibilities, the time limitation imposed on these positions requires the individual to be let go.

Summary

17. When the Legislature creates a position, it typically provides the minimum starting salary for the position. The following table identifies the funding that would be required to fill these requested positions at the minimum salary level, and assumes nine months of funding in the first year of the biennium in anticipation of a period of time for recruitment following enactment of the budget bill. Alternatively, the Committee may elect to fill the positions at the higher initial salary levels requested by DMA.

<u>Position</u>	<u>2009-10</u>	<u>2010-11</u>	<u>Biennium</u>
Southwest Region Director	\$51,300	\$68,400	\$119,700
Public Information Officer Assistant	39,300	52,500	91,800
Public Assistance Officer	<u>39,300</u>	<u>52,500</u>	<u>91,800</u>
Total	\$129,900	\$173,400	\$303,300

18. Under AB 75, the Southwest Region Director would be funded under a new appropriation funded with revenues from the petroleum inspection fee. As petroleum inspection fees have been utilized to fund other emergency management activities, such as payments under the state's major disaster assistance program, the Committee could consider utilizing these funds to create an additional regional director at WEM.

19. On the other hand, if the Committee believes that a funding source other than petroleum inspection fees should fund the program, it could consider making increased use of federal grant funds under the EMPG program.

20. Military Affairs indicates that WEM has received a 50% increase in federal EMPG funding within the last two years. For federal fiscal year 2008, Wisconsin received \$5,383,985 FED in EMPG funding. Of that amount, \$3,589,323 was provided in grants to counties for emergency management activities. The remaining EMPG grant funds are utilized by WEM for: (a) equipment and supplies; (b) retention of limited-term-employees and interns; (c) overtime for WEM staff during activations of the state's emergency operations center; and (d) overtime for WEM employees to staff county field offices during disasters. Military Affairs staff indicates that if the state makes greater use of EMPG funding to support the creation of the requested positions, less EMPG funding will be available for these other purposes.

ALTERNATIVES

A. Southwest Region Director

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to create a 1.0 SEG Southwest Region Director and provide \$114,900 SEG annually to fund the creation of the position. Create the

"division of emergency management operations; petroleum inspection fund" SEG appropriation, authorizing the Department of Military Affairs to expend provided expenditure authority for the general program operations of Wisconsin Emergency Management. Funding for the appropriation would be provided from the petroleum inspection fund.

2. Provide \$51,300 SEG in 2009-10, and \$68,400 SEG in 2010-11, to fund the creation of the position. This would reduce funding under AB 75 by \$63,600 SEG in 2009-10 and \$46,500 SEG in 2010-11, fund the position at the minimum starting salary, and provide nine months of funding in the first year to budget time for a recruitment process.

ALT A2	Change to Bill
	Funding
SEG	- \$110,100

3. Provide \$51,300 FED in 2009-10, and \$68,400 FED in 2010-11, to fund the creation of the position. This would utilize federal Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG) funding, fund the position at the minimum salary level, and provide nine months of funding in the first year to budget time for a recruitment process. In addition, delete the creation of the SEG funded appropriation that would have been utilized to fund the position.

ALT A3	Change to Bill
	Funding
FED	\$119,700
SEG	- <u>229,800</u>
Total	- \$110,100

4. Delete provision.

ALT A4	Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions
SEG	- \$229,800	- 1.00

B. Public Information Officer Assistant

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to create a 1.0 FED public information officer assistant position.

2. Appropriate \$39,300 FED in 2009-10, and \$52,500 FED in 2010-11, in federal EMPG funding to support the creation of the position. This would fund the position at the minimum salary and provide nine months of funding in the first year to budget time for a recruitment process.

ALT B3	Change to Bill	
	Funding	
FED	\$91,800	

3. Delete provision.

ALT B4	Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions
FED	\$0	- 1.00

C. Public Assistance Officer

1. Provide \$47,400 FED in 2009-10, and \$63,200 FED in 2010-11, in federal EMPG funding to support the creation of a 1.0 FED public assistance officer position. This alternative would provide nine months of funding in the first year to budget time for a recruitment process.

ALT C1	Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions
FED	\$110,600	1.00

2. Provide \$39,300 FED in 2009-10, and \$52,500 FED in 2010-11, in federal EMPG funding to support the creation of a 1.0 FED public assistance officer position. This alternative would provide funding at the minimum salary level for the position and provide nine months of funding in the first year to budget time for a recruitment process.

ALT C2	Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions
FED	\$91,800	1.00

3. Take no action.

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