



Snohomish County Council

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Council Continues Deliberations on Hazard Area Regulations

The Snohomish County Council will continue deliberations on Monday, May 5th ranging from a moratorium on new residential construction within landslide hazard zones to interim controls that would permit new construction within those zones with the approval of a geotechnical engineer.

Snohomish County's existing regulations are based on the best available science at the time they were drafted. Generally, buildings within identified landslide hazard areas require 50 foot setbacks at a minimum or half the height of the slope, whichever is greater. The March 22nd slide dwarfed both distances.

On April 23rd, Council Chairman Dave Somers presented a moratorium to the Council to begin the discussion. "I'm pleased with the conversation that has occurred. It's important that we carefully consider the options before us and set a path to move forward" he said.

Somers has since amended his proposal to focus on temporary interim controls that would increase building setbacks from steep slopes and expand requirements for geotechnical assessments prior to permits being issued. These interim controls would apply to new residential, commercial, and public buildings and developments within the identified zones.

"The proposed emergency ordinance would apply stricter requirements while we engage the public and stakeholders in a full review of current regulations and determine whether or not code amendments are necessary" said Somers.

The proposal would direct the County Executive's Office to initiate a comprehensive review and recommend potential amendments to existing county codes related to natural hazard areas. It also calls on the Executive to explore new tools to identify hazardous areas, work jointly with state and federal agencies to coordinate the identification of hazards through the utilization of LIDAR and other technologies, and consider requiring notification of other potential hazard areas on property titles beyond lahar zones that currently must be disclosed.

Adopted emergency ordinances are in effect for six months unless renewed. The interim regulations would not affect permits already issued or otherwise vested or ongoing efforts to reopen Highway 530.

The Council meeting will occur Monday, May 5th at 10:30am in the Jackson Board Room located on the 8th floor of the Robert J. Drewel Building in downtown Everett.

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