

# Long Beach abandons plan for \$4M tsunami shelter project

New reports say much taller berm would be needed

By AMY NILE  
EO Media Group

LONG BEACH, Wash. — The city is halting work on what would have been the first tsunami shelter of its kind in North America.

New scientific reports and preliminary findings of a study foiled the city's plan to build a 32-foot-tall cement berm behind Long Beach Elementary School.

The city last month received the early findings of a study that indicates the berm would need to be built 62.4 feet above average high tide to keep people safe during a worst-case tsunami. That's a considerable increase from the 48-foot standard the city had been using to design the shelter meant to keep about 800 people safe.

"It's not feasible to build a berm that high," Community Development Director Ariel Smith said. "It'd basically sink into the ground."

The project, which was two-thirds of the way through

the design process, has cost \$449,500 so far, she said. The city spent at least \$56,000 of its money on the project. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Washington State Military Emergency Management Division picked up the rest of the tab.

The City Council did not include any money for the project in the 2018 budget, Long Beach Administrator David Glasson said.

### Delays

The city delayed the project after an engineer with the American Society of Civil Engineers reached out in late 2016 to let Long Beach leaders know new research was coming out this year that would likely change the standards for building shelters for a worst-case tsunami.

However, scientists and engineers with the national society and the state disagreed on the new findings, Glasson said. Some suggested the city would need to build a 50-foot-tall berm to keep people safe.

"We had experts upon experts upon experts arguing



Ariel Smith

**'It's not feasible to build a berm that high. It'd basically sink into the ground.'**

Ariel Smith

among themselves," Glasson said.

So the city asked researchers at the University of Washington for help. The researchers agreed and didn't charge the city for the study.

Long Beach was also able to use the donation of the study as its match for the design grant, Glasson said.

The city estimated the berm would cost about \$4 million to design and construct. Long Beach had been approved for another federal grant of \$1.5 million and \$250,000 from the state to help pay for it. But if the city wanted to build a taller berm, they'd have to start over, Glasson said.

"You can look at it as fortunate or unfortunate," he said.

On one hand, the berm could have saved lives. On the other, Glasson said, building it might have given people a false sense of security if it wasn't adequate for a worst-case tsunami.

### Back at square one

City and Pacific County officials say dozens of evacuation sites are needed to provide enough tsunami shelters for the county's year-round population of about 20,500 and its swell of seasonal residents and tourists.

Glasson and County Emergency Management Director Scott McDougall estimate it would take about 30 berms, towers and buildings to keep people out of harm's way.

Without a tsunami evacuation shelter, the best people can do is get to high ground quickly after an earthquake. Glasson said once the shaking stops, peninsula residents should have about 25 minutes before the towering waves and flooding water comes.

Experts and emergency managers say most people survive tsunamis. But those who live on the peninsula should be ready to fend for themselves for weeks in the aftermath of a disaster while waiting for help to arrive.

# Oregon's high school grad rate remains third-worst in nation

Associated Press

PORTLAND — New figures show Oregon once again has the third-worst high school graduation rate in the country.

The Oregonian reported the National Center for Education Statistics says Oregon, for the second straight year, ranks 48th in the nation in students graduating from high school.

Oregon ranked No. 47 for two years before that, but sank

a notch when Alaska raised its success rate.

The only states with lower rates than Oregon are Nevada and New Mexico.

The new rates are for the Class of 2016. Oregon got 74.8 percent of students in its Class of 2016 to earn diplomas within four years of starting high school.

Oregon plans to release graduation rates for the Class of 2017 in late January.

# Oregon sends aid to battle California wildfires

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Ten strike teams from all over the state and 15 Red Cross disaster relief responders are on their way to help battle several massive blazes and provide relief north of Los Angeles.

Some of the Red Cross responders are from Astoria.

Responders from Oregon and southwest Washington will work in disaster relief shelters and deliver medical aid to those staying in the shelters. Additional deployments are expected in the next few days.

The largest and most destructive of the fires, an 85-square-mile wildfire in Ventura County northwest of Los Angeles, had nearly reached the Pacific on Tuesday night after starting 30 miles inland a day earlier. The fires have burned more than 80,000 acres. Nearly 200,000 people have been told to evacuate their homes and more than 430 of them spent Tuesday night at seven Red Cross shelters.

Strikes teams from Oregon will come from Lane, Multnomah, Washington, Linn, Marion, Clackamas, Klamath and Yamhill counties. A combined team from Polk, Linn, and Benton counties and a team from the Rogue Valley area are also en route.

State fire officials say five more strike teams will be dispatched later today. The Oregon Fire Marshal said it is also sending heavy equipment to help.

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# Zinke proposal recommends shrinking Cascade-Siskiyou

By JES BURNS  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is calling for one of the Northwest's national monuments to be reduced in size.

Zinke released a months-old report Tuesday making recommendations to President Donald Trump on the fate of national monuments that previous presidents had established or expanded. Among the recommendations: that the president roll back at least part of the expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National monument.

At the beginning of the year, President Barack Obama nearly doubled the size of the Cascade-Siskiyou monument, adding about 48,000 acres. It now covers 113,000 acres, stretching from southern Oregon into Northern California.

Zinke made no specific recommendations about shifting boundaries for Cascade-Siskiyou. But the report said the boundaries need to

be revised in part to address concerns about reduced access for commercial timber production and motorized vehicles.

Obama's expansion included about 40,000 acres of so-called "O&C Lands" — named for the defunct Oregon & California Railroad which held forest lands that fell into public ownership early in the 20th century. Several Oregon counties have sued the federal government, saying the expansion violates their legal right to continue collecting revenues through the logging of those O&C lands.

The head of a timber industry lobbying group praised the recommendation, saying it will help restore trust in federal land management.

"We thank Secretary Zinke and Interior staff for taking a closer look at this expansion and we urge President Trump to take action to follow the law," said Travis Joseph, president of the American Forest Resource Council in a prepared statement.

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