

OPPOSE HSB 689

An act that mandates emergency management commission budgets receive independent approval from the County Supervisors.

PROBLEM: Giving the County Board of Supervisors **VETO** authority over an approved Emergency Management Commission budget shifts control of local emergency management funding and programming from the statutory joint city-county commission (shared services) to county government and puts every Iowan at risk.

What the bill does

- Requires any emergency management agency funded by the general supplemental levy to receive final independent approval from the county board of supervisors.
- Eliminates current and effective inter-governmental service sharing and collaboration contrary to DOGE recommendations.
- Ignores risk-vulnerability assessments and lessons learned gap analysis as a sound financial programming determinate.
- Fractures 34 years of joint municipal-county collaboration and negates the commission's statutory authorities under [Iowa Code 29C](#) and their duties under [Iowa Administrative Code 605 Chapter 7](#).

Why this matters

- **Nullifies all municipal voting on funding:** Cities are voting members on the emergency management commission; setting, approving, and certifying the agency budget to accomplish the preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation programs jointly prioritized by all city and county representatives on the commission.
- **Ignores regional governance and service sharing models:** Emergency management is designed as a shared service across cities and counties and across counties is some examples. Single, county-only, levy authority undermines intergovernmental partnership, weakens collaboration, and jeopardizes resilience.
- **Creates a disproportionate super member:** Commissions cover all residential and commercial taxpayers. Most of Iowa's population, infrastructure, resources, risk, and significant impacts of emergencies and disasters are within our municipalities. Canceling municipal priorities via budgetary veto authority puts the majority of each county's people, infrastructure, and properties at risk by unilaterally controlling a budget that doesn't meet established joint priorities.
- **Budget instability:** County Supervisors could approve, deny, or modify funding levels without municipal consent which will have an adverse effect on the approved and

needed staffing, operational programming, and efficacy of preparedness, response, and recovery programming that our municipalities rely on.

Adverse impacts on services

- Municipal input on local hazard mitigation, floodplain management, preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience projects is meaningless without the required financial programming – this has a negative consequence on a majority of our state's infrastructure and the health, safety, and security of the majority of Iowa's residents.
- Reduced support of municipal police, fire, EMS, public works, and other essential services in planning, training, exercise, and operational support.
- Creates potential inequities between incorporated and unincorporated areas related to program delivery and disaster services.
- Could force municipal governments into providing additional tax revenue to sustain essential programs or create their own agency, leading to further strains on general funds and double taxation on a majority of Iowa taxpayers.

Key message to legislators

- Emergency management in Iowa is a joint (shared) city-county public safety agency.
- Use of the General Supplemental Levy is the only non-duplicative equitable tax among municipal, rural, residential, and commercial taxpayers.
- The funding that supports emergency management knows no political boundaries – it is for all.
- HSB 689 is inconsistent with DOGE Task Force recommendations.
- HSB 689 could lead to additional taxation for programs, and will certainly put Iowans, Municipal Governments, and Infrastructure at risk.

Emergency management funding needs to be stable and predictable. If levy approval becomes subject to county board approval, budgets can be delayed or leveraged during unrelated political disputes. Public safety capability should not hinge on political dynamics.