

**Testimony
Seattle City Council
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King County OEM
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The following is testimony given at a hearing of the Seattle City Council regarding the December 14 Windstorm.

- Much has been said, reported, and proposed about the December 2006 Windstorm. Rather than focusing specifically on the windstorm, I will frame my remarks in a broader context that is future oriented.
- That contest is building regional disaster resilience, and your primary roles as elected officials.
- I believe that disaster turn into catastrophes when there is a failure in preplanning and mitigation.
- Katrina and the second battle of New Orleans was lost not in the uncoordinated local, state and federal response, but when the levees failed. When that happened, it was “game over” for the long run—as evidenced by today’s status in that city.
- Mitigation is best summed up by, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Or, in today’s terms, “A few tens of thousands, or millions of dollars invested before the disaster will save billions in response and recovery.”
- While disaster response is sexy and gets the limelight, it is before the disaster in chambers like these with elected officials like you that in the end will make the real difference.
- Success in the next catastrophe that hits Seattle, or any other jurisdiction will be predicated on two things:

- What investment has been made in mitigation?
- How prepared is your citizenry to be on their own for a minimum of three days, and in reality for a major it event, seven days?
- Our police and fire organizations will never be sized or equipped to deal with disasters. Their size is typically based on the day-to-day emergencies. We cannot as a society afford the cost of having them be sized for disasters.
- Therefore, the solution is an informed citizenry that is motivated to be prepared as individuals and families. Who then are positioned to help one another, neighbor helping neighbor. Without this in place our disaster response id doomed to failure. Adequately funding your public education programs is one of the best investments you can make.
- I would like to challenge you as individuals at all of your speaking engagements and other venues to include a disaster preparedness message, of “Have a plan, build a kit, and get involved.” And, then model that behavior yourselves. I promise you your message will be well received.
- Lastly, Barb Graff is building a quality organization that takes a regional perspective. Please continue to support her.
- I have provided each of you a copy of a National Academies Disasters Roundtable called, “Community Disaster Resilience.” I commend it to your reading and study.
<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11769.html>