Legislature approves aid bill

Money will assist homeowners in paying for earthquake damages, help furnish new energy users.

By Paul Skinner
Affordable Housing
The Legislature approved a bill that would provide $120 million in additional funding for helping homeowners pay for earthquake repairs and furnish new energy users.

The bill, which was passed in both houses of the Legislature, expands the state's existing earthquake assistance program. It would provide up to $1 million in grants to homeowners who have suffered significant damage from the 2001 Nisqually earthquake or subsequent aftershocks. The program is intended to help homeowners pay for repairs to their homes and furnish new energy users.

The funding will be used to help pay for repairs to homes that sustained at least 20 percent of their value in damage. The program will also provide assistance to new energy users, who may be eligible for up to $25,000 in grants.

The bill was sponsored by state Sen. Robert McCaslin, D-Seattle, and state Rep. Johnanna M. Williams, D-Seattle. McCaslin said the program is needed to help thousands of homeowners who were left high and dry by the earthquake.

"This bill will provide a much-needed financial lifeline to those who are still struggling to recover from the Nisqually earthquake," McCaslin said. "The devastation was widespread, and many homeowners are still struggling to pay for repairs to their homes. This funding will help them get back on their feet and get their lives back to normal."