Washington State’s effort to seismically retrofit highways and bridges faces an enormous funding shortfall.

If new funding is not found, the state’s budget for protecting vital transportation infrastructure could drop from $22 million to zero bi-annually. The result would be a 100-year back log of projects to complete, essentially leaving the bridges on selected corridors vulnerable when a major earthquake hits.

The Washington State Department of Transportation has retrofitted over 400 bridges to date. Earthquake proofing involves reinforcing bridges and roadways with additional steel and concrete to make them less vulnerable to collapse and failure during a major earthquake.

California and Washington are the two states in the nation with greatest seismic risk.

**Key Roadways Identified as Too Expensive to Fix**

- More than 450 bridges statewide remain to be retrofitted with total cost of $1.2 billion.

- Central Puget Sound faces $1 billion backlog on hundreds of structures.

- To manage costs against competing priorities, many bridges have been reduced in priority, including access routes, overcrossings and ramps on the region’s major freeways.

- I-5 from Boeing Field to Lake City Way, the western approach to the 520 bridge, portions of I-90 and other key roadways will not be protected under current plans.

- It would take nearly 100 years to retrofit all of the region’s vulnerable bridges should funding trends continue.

- The State Route 99 Tunnel will be only “life line” route available through Seattle in major earthquake.

The most recent significant earthquake, the Nisqually Earthquake of 2001 resulted in statewide losses exceeding $1 billion and injured 700 people.
Our Region at Risk

WSDOT’s retrofit program has identified hundreds of highway bridges in need of earthquake proofing. In central Puget Sound, more than 800,000 people in cars, 93,000 on buses and 37,000 trucks travel each day on major state roadways.

Vital Economic Corridors Vulnerable to Earthquakes

State roadways will be essential corridors for emergency response following an earthquake and for spurring economic recovery. They provide critical movement of people and goods north and south, and east and west through the central Puget Sound. A damaged bridge or roadway from an earthquake would gridlock emergency responders, traffic and freight, crippling the region’s recovery.

King County

- **I-5:** Because of cost, the I-5 mainline from Boeing Field to Lake City Way has been removed from the priority retrofit plan (Lifeline Corridor Plan), as have all ramps, overcrossings, and access roadways along I-5. WSDOT suggests that the SR 99 tunnel can provide a lifeline route north/south through Seattle should I-5 fail.
- **I-90:** While the I-90 from I-5 across Mercer Island is designed to withstand a 1000 year earthquake, the portion across the East Channel Bridge to the I-405 interchange requires retrofitting, and is outside of the current WSDOT retrofit plan.
- **SR 520:** The West side from Montlake to I-5 will remain vulnerable until money is found to replace that section as part of the 520 Floating Bridge project.

Snohomish County

- **I-5:** Critical sections of I-5 accessing Everett and the growing industrial areas of Marysville and Arlington (home to many aerospace suppliers) are excluded from the lifeline system and remain vulnerable.

Pierce County

- **I-5:** Because of unstable soils and hollow columns, the critical I-5 bridge over the Puyallup River is one of the most seismically vulnerable bridges in the state. Because of cost, this bridge is excluded from WSDOT’s seismic retrofit program, but a separate project has been designed to replace both structures to better serve traffic and withstand earthquakes. The northbound bridge replacement is funded, while the southbound bridge remains unfunded.

Kitsap County

- **Agate Pass Bridge:** The only roadway access to Bainbridge Island remains vulnerable, is not on the lifeline system.
- **State Route 3:** A number of overcrossings remain vulnerable on this important defense access route.