

State of California  
Seismic Safety Commission

Memo

To: Commissioners

From: Richard McCarthy  
Seismic Safety Commission  
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Date: 7/3/13

Subject: **Commission Role/Recommendations on an Earthquake  
Early Warning System for California**

**Background**

The Commission has participated in CalEMA's Earthquake Early Warning Workgroup. Members include CalEMA, Caltech, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the California Geological Survey, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Berkeley Seismological Laboratory, Seismic Warning Systems, and the Seismic Safety Commission.

Commissioner Ghilarducci has led three meetings (on behalf of CalEMA) of this working group and has requested recommendations on defining what a functional earthquake early warning system would be most effective for the State and structuring a cost-effective partnership consisting of federal, state, and local government, universities, and private industry.

Chairman Gardner will lead a Commission discussion on what recommendation the Commission would like to submit, if any.

Draft recommendations (examples) submitted to date:

Commissioner Strack

The system must have a way to discern a significant event vs. a false positive before it is released to anyone but the monitoring agency. Public Safety cannot be reactive to every little "possible" event, especially if it is false. We in Public Safety will have significant resources expended if an alert is false positive and internally we are required to respond and especially if the public gets wind of it and that will cause panic.

There MUST be a broad cross section of leaders in all

fields involved in the planning and implementation process; especially local government, business, public safety, private stakeholders such as utilities and surface transportation, and state leadership.

The system must be the best for California, not the rest of the country or the rest of the world. The system needs to be evaluated and tested by someone that is an expert and not involved with any of the CISN group.

Early warning is necessary for California, the science is great, but the policy needs to be drawn up by the policy makers.

Commissioner Miyamoto

We need to engage all stakeholders to initiate a successful early warning system.

- engage local governments
- engage mobile network providers
- engage TV and radio media
- engage private sector warning systems
- engage utilities
- engage the commercial sector

It is better to have a commercially sustainable warning system. This system can be more robust and cost-effective than the system that purely relies on limited public funds.

### **Recommendation**

Staff requests a full discussion by the Commission and then give direction to the staff on how it would like to proceed on this issue.