



State of California  
Seismic Safety Commission  
Biannual Newsletter  
January through June 2005



**Commission Holds Tsunami Workshop to Review Issues Facing California in Light of Indian Ocean Tsunamis**

On December 26, 2004, the M 9.0 the Sumatra Andaman Island earthquake caused massive destruction. The tsunami motivated many decision-makers to re-evaluate California's tsunami risk. On March 15, 2005, the Commission held a workshop to focus on tsunami risk issues facing California. The workshop was informative and approximately 80 people attended. Topics and speakers included:

***Tsunami Risk to California—***

- Overview of the Indian Ocean Tsunamis of December 26, 2004, Dr. Jose Borrero/Dr. Costas Synolakis, University of Southern California Tsunami Research Investigation and Modeling Overview of Potential Tsunami Sources, Dr. Michael Reichle, California Geological Survey
- Overview of Coastal Processes on Tsunami Inundation, Dr. Reinhard Flick, California Department of Boating and Waterways, Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Mr. Hany Elwany, Coastal Environments, Scripps Institution of Oceanography

***Proposed Expansion of Pacific Tsunami Warning System—***

- Disposition of Tsunami Warning System and Proposed Expansion of Tsunami Warning System, Dr. Eddie Bernard, Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory
- Status of California Tsunami Warning and Mitigation Actions, Mr. Rich Eisner, Administrator Coastal Region, State of California OES
- Tsunami Inundation Mapping Update, Dr. Costas Synolakis/Dr. Jose Borrero, University of Southern California Tsunami Research Center
- Status of Tsunami Warning and Mitigation in the State of Washington, Mr. George Crawford, State of Washington, Emergency Management Division

***Tsunami Mitigation—***

- Structural Damage and Response to Historic California Tsunamis, Mr. Orville Magoon, Coastal Zone Found.
- Overview of Infrastructure Performance in the Indian Ocean Basin and Design Issue for California Infrastructure, Mr. Martin Eskigian, State Lands Commission
- Overview of Performance of Ports, Harbors, and Infrastructure Indian Ocean Basin and the Port of Los Angeles Tsunami Planning, Preparedness and Mitigation Activities, Mr. Peter Yin, Port of Los Angeles

***Tsunami Public Education/Outreach—***

- Tsunami Education Outreach in Northern California, Dr. Lori Dengler, Humboldt State University/Redwood Coast Tsunami Work Group
- Los Angeles County Tsunami Assessment and Preparedness and Mitigation Activities, Mr. Jeff Terry, Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management
- Inundation Mapping Using Computer Animation and Beach Evacuation Issues, Captain Angus Alexander, Los Angeles County Fire Department Lifeguard
- Tsunami Hazards Response and Planning, Captain Larry Collins, Los Angeles County Fire Department
- Program Overview and the Role of the NWS in Tsunami Warning, Dr. Eric Boldt, National Weather Service, Oxnard, California Office, *Tsunami Ready*



*The commission hears informative presentations at the March 15, 2005 hearing on tsunami risk.*

## **Commission Forms Ad Hoc Committee to Recommend Mitigation Efforts for California's Tsunami Risk**

After heightened awareness from the M9.0 Sumatra Andaman Island Earthquake, on December 26, 2004, the Commission established an Ad Hoc Committee to examine the tsunami hazards and risk potential in California and identify areas needing improvement.

The Committee will prepare a report with findings and recommendations for Commission approval to be transmitted to the Governor, Legislature and the California Congressional Delegation. The goal is to improve tsunami awareness and safety in California and coordinate with other states and the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program (NTHMP). Of the five states in the NTHMP, California by far has largest population at risk from tsunamis.

Committee members are: Commissioners Don Parker, (Chairman), Linden Nishinaga, Dan Shapiro, Dr. Jose Borrero, University of Southern California Tsunami Research, Dr. Lori Dengler, Humboldt State University, Redwood Coast Tsunami Work Group, Rich Eisner, Coastal Region Administrator, Office of Emergency Services, Orville Magoon, President, Coast Zone Foundation, Jeff Terry, Program Specialist, Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management, Crystall Rockwood, National Director of Communications for Pillsbury Winthrop, and Dr. Michael Reichle, Chief Seismologist for the California Geological Survey.

### **Scope of Work**

The Committee will conduct 5 of meetings to establish the scope of work, and draw on the expertise of invited participants from earth scientists, university researchers, medical professionals, emergency responders, social policy and others.

From testimony received, the Committee is tasked with reviewing tsunami detection, warning, evacuation, response, education and outreach, developing few key findings and recommendations.

The Committee will identify efforts undertaken by state and local governments to assess and mitigate tsunami risk, including review of existing building and planning practices in the coastal zone.

The Committee will report to the Seismic Safety Commission periodically on the progress of the findings of the Committee and submit the Committee's recommendations at the Commission's November 2005 meeting for review and approval of the report. The final report will be released in December 2005.

## **Los Angeles Port Officials Provide Technical Tour of Harbor and Discuss Seismic Risk to the Port**

On March 14, 2005, Port Officials James MacLellan, director of Marketing, Port of Los Angeles; and Peter Yin, Senior Structural Engineer, Port of Los Angeles, provided the Commission and members of the public an opportunity to learn about seismic risks to the Port of Los Angeles. Presentations were also made by Geologist Bruce Schell and Seismic Safety Commissioner Linden Nishinaga.

Port experts pointed out that the 7,500-acre Port of Los Angeles is the busiest container seaport in the United States and the 6th busiest in the world, with an annual container volume in 2004 of 7.4 million TEU's (twenty-foot equivalent units). Its cargo value in 2003 was \$122 billion and total operating revenue in 2004 was \$352 million. Port economic benefits include 259,000 full and part-time jobs in Southern California, 1.3 million jobs nationwide, and \$1.4 billion annual state and local taxes. Earthquakes and tsunamis would have devastating potential effects on port personnel as well as on the local, state, and national economies. During a harbor tour, the physical layout, infrastructure, and recent 2020 Program expansion developments were explained.

*Pictured below from left to right: Commissioner Linden Nishinaga, James MacLellan, and Peter Yin from the Port of Los Angeles.*



## Commission Distributes Recently-Released Report on Seismic Safety in California's Schools

The California Seismic Safety Commission examined the seismic safety requirements for schools in California after concerns were raised about the risks posed by older school buildings and the different seismic standards for public, private, and charter schools. A review of policies and standards was conducted by the Commission and a report was developed to address these questions. The Commission's Report, entitled *Seismic Safety in California's Schools* was approved in December 2004 and distributed to members of the Legislature in January 2005. The report is available on the Commission's web site.

## Farewell to Commissioner Stan Moy

After accepting a Governor's appointment to the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission in May, Stan Y. Moy resigned from the Commission. Commissioner Moy was appointed in May 2000 and served as the Commission's architect representative, and also served one term as Chairman. He served on several committees: *Improving Natural Gas Safety in Earthquakes*, the *Use of Non-Field Act Compliant Buildings for Public Schools*, *Pacific Earthquake Engineering Research Center Review*, and the *Budget and Planning Committee*.

In Commissioner Moy's letter to the Governor, he writes "The continuing work of the California Seismic Safety Commission is vital to the welfare and health of the State in many ways. I urge your support of its important mission." The Commission wishes Stan Moy well and he will be greatly missed.



## Homeowner's Guide to Earthquake Preparedness Updated and Simplified

The Commission contracted with the Collaborative for Disaster Mitigation, San Jose State University to update and simplify the Commission's *The Homeowner's Guide to Earthquake Safety*. The booklet was developed and adopted by the Seismic Safety Commission per existing law. California law contains several provisions to help protect buyers and sellers in home transactions. With respect to a residential buildings' ability to resist earthquakes, the law requires only that sellers inform buyers about known weaknesses. This booklet helps the seller fulfill the legal requirement for selling a home built before 1960 by explaining how to complete the required disclosure report(s). The effective date for the updated booklet to be used in real estate transactions is July 1, 2005.

*Pictured below is Executive Director Richard McCarthy at the Disaster Resistant California Press Conference unveiling the new Homeowner's Guide to Earthquake Preparedness.*



## Grand Opening of Operation Hope, Hope Center

The Commission congratulates organizers of Operation Hope for the grand opening of their Hope Center in Oakland on January 13, 2005. Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi and Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown were present for the ceremony. The Hope Center provides financial assistance and information to victims following a disaster. John Bryant, Executive Director of Operation Hope, was one of last year's keynote speakers at the OES Disaster Resistant Conference giving an overview of some of the opportunities for financial relief after a disaster. The Commission is looking for future opportunities to partner with Operation Hope for Educational and Outreach purposes.

*Pictured left is the ribbon cutting ceremony with insurance Commissioner John Garamendi, Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown, and John Bryant, Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Operation Hope.*

# Seismic Safety Legislative Update

## COMMISSION-SPONSORED BILLS

AB 584 (Blakeslee)- This bill repeals references to the obsolete Alquist Fund (inactive) and transfers funds remaining in the Alfred E. Alquist Earthquake Fund to the Seismic Safety Account for expenditure in the 2005-2006 fiscal year. The bill is currently awaiting final action by the full Senate.

AB 1374 (Liu) - This measure repeals the existing sunset on the Commission's funding arrangement with the Insurance Fund. The bill is pending before the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB 1054 (Soto) - This bill imposes a threshold building code standard on charter schools. This bill establishes that the UBC would apply to charter school facilities. It imposes a 2007 deadline for non-compliance, exempts charter schools in owned by federal agencies, and clarifies that local agencies are responsible for enforcement.

## POSITION BILLS: (Bills the Commission adopted a position on)

AB 304 (Hancock)- [SUPPORT] Authorizes local government to establish reconstruction standards applicable to existing wood framed, multiunit residential soft-story buildings. The bill is pending in the Senate.

AB 1047 (Levine) - [SUPPORT] This bill establishes the "Safe Hospitals Bond Act of 2005" authorizing the issuance of state general obligation bonds to finance hospital improvements required under the Alquist Act. This bill failed in the Assembly Health Committee on April 27.

AB 1275 (Frommer) - [OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED] Authorizes a \$5 billion state bond sale to finance hospital seismic safety improvements and suspends existing hospital seismic deadlines if bonds are not approved by voters. This bill is now a two-year bill.

SB 167 (Speier) - [SUPPORT] This bill accelerates the current 2030 standards to 2020 if a hospital adopts a formal resolution and agrees to a new progress schedule. Amended version includes a 2015 milestone and penalty for missing the 2015 deadline. This bill is awaiting hearing before Senate Health Committee on July 5, 2005.

SB 477 (Soto) - [SUPPORT] - This bill authorizes OES to establish a post-disaster (community-based) recovery process with guidelines for community recovery. This bill is currently in the Assembly Governmental Organization Committee.

SB 1024 (Perota) - [SUPPORT] This bill creates the Safe Facilities, Improved Mobility and Clean Air Bond Act of 2005 authorizing the issuance of 7.7 billion in general obligation bonds for retrofitting of state-owned bridges, ports and other essential facilities. This bill is currently in the Senate awaiting final approval.

### *Seismic Safety Commission Staff*

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*Henry Sepulveda - Legislative Director, Rebeca Romo, Legislative Intern*  
*Henry Reyes - Senior Engineer, James Lee, Tsunami Intern*

## Commission Elects New Officers

At the May 2005 Meeting, the Commission elected Donald Parker as Vallejo's Fire Chief, Commission Chair, and Larry Klein as Vice Chair. Chairman Parker represents *fire protection*, and Vice Chairman Klein represents *utilities*. Their term as officer is one year.

## Safetyville USA 7th Annual Family Safety & Health Expo

The Commission participated in the May 7, 2005 Family Safety & Health Expo with its informational display and earthquake prediction contest. The purpose of the Expo was to offer information to protect the health and safety of families in the Sacramento area. The Expo was well attended with over 3,000 in attendance. Staff members Robert Anderson, Richard McCarthy and Karen Cogan represented the Commission.

### *Did you know...*

—that when a disaster is declared, most federally insured institutions will accommodate disaster survivors within a certain amount of time? It is important for people to contact their creditors soon after the disaster so that they can express their need for leniency. A creditor has no way of knowing that someone is in a disaster area unless that person contacts them, so it's very important to do.



*Pictured above, Commissioner Donald Manning and Karen Cogan, Education & Outreach Manager work the Commission's Exhibit at Nestle's Earthquake Fair*

## Sacramento Living History Day Remembers 1906 San Francisco Earthquake

On April 30, 2005, the Sacramento Museum Volunteer Association, California State Capitol Museum reenacted scenes from the State Capitol Experience of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. The scenes chosen were well orchestrated, very interesting and quite factual. They emphasized the challenges Sacramento faced with the earthquake refugees that came from San Francisco. The volunteers acted out several scenes in the State Capitol and wore period costumes. The members of the Museum Volunteer Association are to be commended for their talent and dedication.

## Nestle Corporation Holds Annual Earthquake Fair



*Left, members of the Volunteer Association pose while waiting to lead another tour group re-enacting scenes from the State Capitol after the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake*

On May 4, 2005, Nestle Corporation held its Annual Earthquake Fair. Commissioner Donald Manning, Executive Director Richard McCarthy, and Newsletter Editor Karen Cogan enjoyed educating Nestle employees about earthquake probabilities and earthquake preparedness. This event provided a great opportunity for education and awareness. The winner of the prediction contest that day was Dennis Wun-Young of South Pasadena, California, who chose Monterey County, for the largest earthquake in California for the day. A magnitude 2.7 occurred that day in Monterey County. Congratulations Dennis!

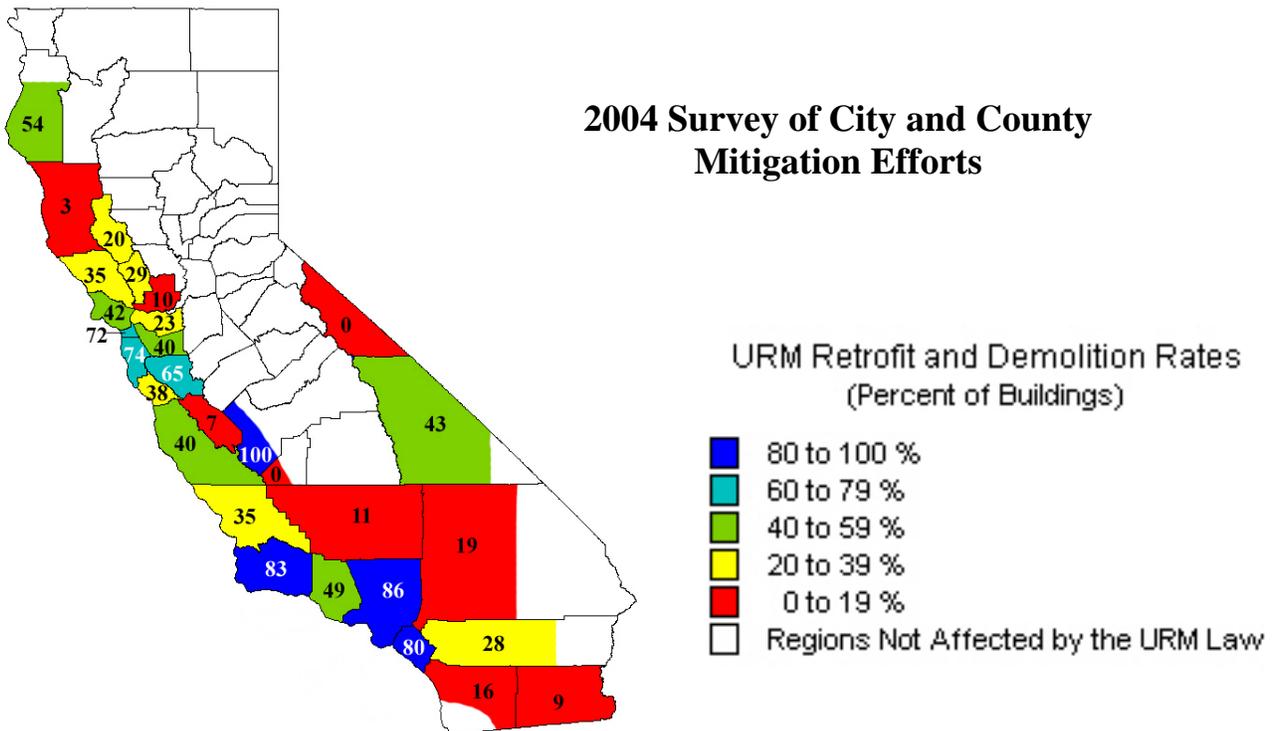
# California Unreinforced Masonry (URM) Progress Report

The Commission approved its latest progress report on the State's unreinforced masonry (URM) building program at the June 9th Meeting.

URM's buildings are vulnerable in earthquakes causing more earthquake-related deaths worldwide than all other building types combined. Since the passage of the State's URM Law in 1986, California has lost ten lives from the collapse of these buildings in earthquakes. Retrofits work, since no lives were lost in fully retrofitted buildings in recent earthquakes.

256 local governments within the State's highest seismic hazard regions established programs to retrofit old brick or stone buildings. The cities and counties inventoried over 25,000 buildings and to date owners retrofitted or demolished 69 percent of them. About 8000 URM buildings remain unretrofitted. This latest progress report includes for the first time a map showing the variation of mitigation progress across the State. It also includes a new mitigation rate for each jurisdiction so that the public can compare local progress with neighboring communities and the State's average.

For a free download of the report, go to [www.seismic.ca.gov](http://www.seismic.ca.gov) and look in the Publications Section for Report No. SSC 2005-02 titled "Status of the Unreinforced Masonry Building Law."



## **Update from Department of General Services on Effort to Retrofit State and Local Government Buildings**

At the Commission's June meeting, Mr. Joel McRonald from the California Department of General Services summarized the state's 15-year effort to retrofit state and local government buildings that are at risk of collapse and life loss in earthquakes. The Seismic Safety Commission sponsored legislation creating a successful \$300 million bond program in 1990 under Proposition 122. With those funds, the Department of General Services (DGS) completed 142 state government retrofit projects and 124 local government projects. The Commission was instrumental in helping DGS establish priorities for the funding and evaluating proposed projects.

Mr. McRonald noted that while his Department has made excellent progress, many more government buildings remain vulnerable within the 17,000 state-owned building stock and tens of thousands of local government buildings. Now that Proposition 122 funds are largely depleted, DGS has plans underway for an additional twenty new seismic retrofit projects using other funds in capital improvement projects. Without additional funds, retrofit progress will diminish in coming years.

## **Commission Testifies Before Senate Governmental Organization Committee**

On Tuesday June 28, 2005, the Senate Governmental Organization Committee held an informational hearing entitled "Is California Tsunami Ready?" Commission Chairman Don Parker testified on behalf of the Commission. Chairman Parker informed the Committee that after the Sumatra Earthquake, it was clear the event was similar to California's risk from the Cascadia Subduction Zone. From information extrapolated from a March 2005 Workshop, the Commission realized the need to form a committee to examine the issues in greater detail and make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature on

what is working and what needs to be refined regarding tsunami education, preparation, notification, and policy. The Commission's report is expected in by December 2005.

Others that were called to testify were representatives from the West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Warning Center, National Weather Service, Governor's Office of Emergency Services, San Francisco Emergency Communications Department, Caltrans, and other local officials.

## **Offshore Earthquake Triggers Tsunami Warning**

On June 14, 2005, a Magnitude 7.2 earthquake approximately 97 miles west of Trinidad, California triggered a tsunami warning for California, Oregon, Washington and parts of British Columbia.. The earthquake produced a small non-destructive tsunami. The response of State and local governments varied widely. Response depended on communication and dissemination of information in a timely manner. One aspect of the warning was the use of the information near the tsunami source to determine if evacuations should be carried out or not. The main result of the tsunami warning was the identification of communication problems federal, state and local governments experienced.

A tsunami summit is being planned by OES for July to address those communication issues raised during the tsunami warning.

### **Are Your Financial Affairs In Order?**

Operation Hope, Hope Coalition has an excellent Emergency Financial First Aid Kit that everyone should complete before a disaster. Often, it is difficult to retrieve financial information quickly after a disaster. This kit is designed to help eliminate the confusion and frustration of finding all the necessary papers and emergency information needed after a disaster.

Visit the website today and get prepared!

<http://www.operationhope.org/documents/EmergencyFinancialFirstAidKit.pdf>



Before Earthquake

# Homeowner's Guide to Earthquake Safety

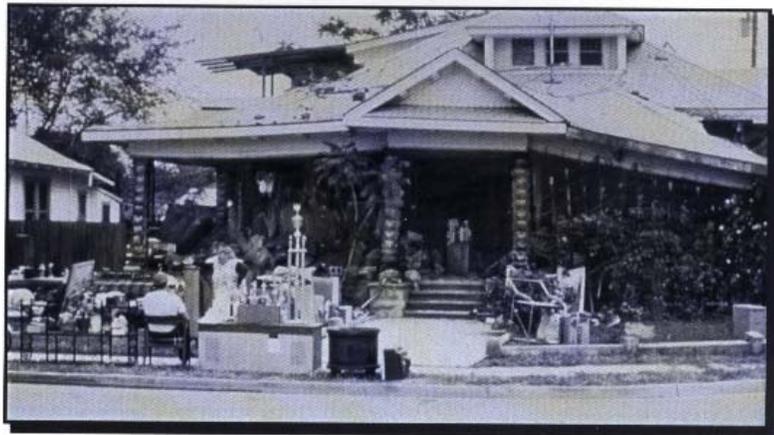
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Damage from magnitude 6.7 earthquake



Additional damage from aftershocks

*Order the updated Homeowner's Guide to Earthquake Preparedness today  
(916) 263-5506, or download from our website at [www.seismic.ca.gov](http://www.seismic.ca.gov)*