



Reauthorization of the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP)

Statement by SSA Board of Directors on the Reauthorization of the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP)

May 8, 2017

The Seismological Society of America supports the reauthorization of the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) and urges Congress to reauthorize and fully fund this critical public safety legislation.

Seventy-five percent of the United States population is exposed to significant risks from earthquakes, and the majority of those risks are concentrated in urban areas. Damage to buildings by earthquakes is estimated at \$6.1 billion per year nationwide, but total losses from earthquakes to the economy are estimated to be much larger [[FEMA Annualized Earthquake Losses – P-366 2017](#)].

NEHRP is the federal government's coordinated long-term nationwide program to reduce risks to life and property resulting from earthquakes, and to facilitate social, economic and industrial recovery after a major earthquake. NEHRP addresses this mission through the development of effective practices and policies for earthquake loss reduction, improvement of techniques for identifying and reducing earthquake vulnerabilities and implementation of research to improve the understanding of earthquakes and their effects.

NEHRP is essential for coordinating the work of key federal agencies that address earthquake-related issues (FEMA, NIST, NSF and USGS). It focuses the efforts of these agencies on the activities that our nation most needs to improve its earthquake resilience. The NEHRP agencies work in partnership to perform a national service that cannot be duplicated by others, with each agency fulfilling its unique role without overlapping with the roles of its partners.

The agencies responsible for NEHRP collaborate extensively with the academic, public, and private sectors to produce critical research and data that directly support improvements to building codes, and community and commercial planning. Without NEHRP as a catalyst, these improvements would likely not be implemented. The agencies also deliver reliable real-time assessment of earthquake activity in the US and worldwide for effective emergency response, and to protect both domestic and global US interests.

The National Academy of Sciences report "National Earthquake Resilience: Research, Implementation, and Outreach" outlined a program of research, preparedness and mitigation by the NEHRP agencies that is fundamental to making our nation earthquake-resilient. Reauthorization is critical to the full implementation of NEHRP and the successful translation of research into actions and results that protects the nation from the devastating effects of a major earthquake.

For these reasons and for the future safety, wealth, and security of the nation, SSA strongly encourages Congress to act on the reauthorization of NEHRP.