



State Of California

# ALFRED E. ALQUIST SEISMIC SAFETY COMMISSION



*Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor*

Gary McGavin, AIA  
*Architectural Planning  
Chairman*

Dennis Mileti  
*Social Services  
Vice-Chair*

Lawrence Klein  
*Utilities*

Dr. Lucy Jones  
*Seismology*

Hon. Elaine Alquist  
*State Senate*

Ken Cooley  
*Cities Government*

Hon. Mark Church  
*Local Government*

Dr. Bruce Clark  
*Geology*

Hon. Sam Blakeslee  
*State Assembly*

Chief Don Parker  
*Fire Protection*

Celestine Palmer  
*Insurance*

Daniel Shapiro  
*Structural Engineering*

Keith Wheeler  
*Emergency Services*

Arul Arulmoli  
*Soils Engineer*

Andrew Adelman  
*City Building Official*

Henry Renteria  
*Office of Emergency  
Services*

David Thorman  
*State Architect*

Dave Walls  
*Building Standards  
Commission*

Richard McCarthy  
*Executive Director*

Seismic Safety Commission

Minutes of Meeting

April 12, 2007

Wine and Roses Hotel and Conference Center  
2505 West Turner Road, Lodi, California

## Members Participating

Gary McGavin, Chair  
Dennis Mileti, Vice Chair  
Andrew Adelman (joined at 10:10 a.m.)  
Kandiah (Arul) Arulmoli  
Bruce Clark  
Lawrence T. Klein  
Grace Koch  
Daniel Shapiro  
David Thorman  
David Walls

## Members Absent

Senator Elaine Alquist  
Assemblymember Sam Blakeslee  
Mark Church  
Lucy Jones  
Celestine Palmer  
James Wattenburger  
Keith Wheeler

## Staff Participating

Robert Anderson, Staff Geologist  
Karen Cogan, Executive Assistant  
Veronica Ramirez, Legislative Intern  
Henry Reyes, Staff Structural Engineer  
Larry Rillera, Director of Legislative Affairs

## I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Commission Chairman Gary McGavin called the meeting of the Seismic Safety Commission to order at 9:04 a.m. Executive Assistant Karen Cogan called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

## II. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Chairman McGavin said the Commission was pleased to be in Lodi. He thanked Executive Assistant Karen Cogan and Mr. Keith Harwood, Wine and Roses Resort, for making the meeting arrangements. He introduced Ms. Sarah Sutherland, Lodi Conference and Visitors Bureau, and invited her to address the Commission.

Ms. Sutherland welcomed the Commission to Lodi and wished commissioners an enjoyable stay.

## III. OVERVIEW OF GEOLOGIC RISK IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY

Dr. Michael Reichle, California Geological Survey, presented an overview of the seismic risk in California's Central Valley. He noted that this area does not have as much seismic activity as other parts of the state and does not receive as much attention, but there is historical evidence of strong earthquake shaking and river flooding. He showed maps depicting earthquake faults running through the Central Valley and identified epicenters of past major earthquakes.

Commissioner Clark observed that long-period ground motions can cause problems for above-ground structures, and he asked about the potential for levee failures. Dr. Reichle responded that liquefaction and unstable soils is a bigger problem than intense shaking for most of the Delta. He acknowledged that the liquefaction potential of Delta soils needs further study in order to understand where failures are likely to occur.

Chairman McGavin thanked Dr. Reichle for his presentation.

ACTION: No Action Required

#### **IV. CENTRAL VALLEY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS OVERVIEW**

Mr. Ronald E. Baldwin, Director, Office of Emergency Operations, San Joaquin County, discussed San Joaquin's emergency preparedness efforts. He noted that the government's recent emphasis on homeland security and terrorism is a problem for small rural areas like San Joaquin County that face more imminent threats from floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters. He said local governments and the State of California have made considerable progress in emergency management by adopting the Standardized Emergency Management Systems (SEMS), and federal programs should support these efforts rather than distract from them.

Mr. Baldwin said the earthquake risk to the Delta area depends on a number of key factors, including the condition of levees and water levels at the time an earthquake takes place. He noted that failure of levees could result in flooding of many small islands and could affect the water supply to Southern California.

Mr. Baldwin recommended focusing on taking steps now to save the Delta. He stated that San Joaquin County is participating in a five-county flood response-planning group, and he advocated establishing similar regional plans for other hazards and response efforts. Mr. Baldwin described San Joaquin County's emergency operations center staffing. He emphasized the importance of cross-training and coordination and improving infrastructure as the most effective ways to make destruction of Delta levees less likely.

ACTION: No Action Required

Chairman McGavin thanked Mr. Baldwin for his remarks.

#### **V. MASS FATALITY PLANNING IN CALIFORNIA**

Mr. Robert Gerber, Deputy Chief, Law Enforcement Branch, Governor's Office of Emergency Services, gave a presentation on mass fatality planning issues. He noted that the

subject of what to do with dead bodies after disasters is taboo and tends to be avoided, so there are few procedures in place for identifying deceased victims and dealing with bodies.

Mr. Gerber described his experience helping coroners deal with mass fatalities after the 2005 tsunami in Thailand and after Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana. He warned that California could have between 3,000 and 14,000 fatalities after a major earthquake on the San Andreas Fault.

Mr. Gerber showed a *New York Times* video segment about dealing with mass catastrophes. He noted the video images portray an incompetent and uncaring government. He expressed concern about what could happen in future disasters. Mr. Gerber observed that there is currently no official concept or plan for the state to assist local governments in dealing with fatalities. He said there is an existing mutual aid system for California's coroners and medical examiners, but that network could well be overwhelmed in a major earthquake, terrorist attack, tsunami, or pandemic. Mr. Gerber stated that federal response plans are still unclear and poorly coordinated, and the problems revealed in 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina have not been corrected.

Mr. Gerber described his efforts to develop a statewide plan for dealing with mass fatalities in California. He said he first met with coroners and medical examiners from the seven mutual aid areas in the state to discuss several potential mass disaster scenarios, ask questions to gauge current levels of preparedness, and identify gaps. He indicated he also reviewed existing reports and information, and then began drafting a plan for organizing California's response.

Mr. Gerber noted his draft plan describes the state's mutual aid system, identifies resources for assisting coroners and medical examiners, addresses key assumptions and issues, and provides a reference manual with specific standards and protocol for identifying bodies and notifying relatives. He said the plan should serve as a catalyst for policy and legislation and can be used to foster greater public-private collaboration. Mr. Gerber advised that a mass fatality-planning group will be reviewing the third draft of the plan in May, and the final plan should be ready by August.

ACTION: No Action Required

Commissioner Koch praised Mr. Gerber for his leadership on this issue.

## **VI. APPROVAL OF MARCH 2007 TELECONFERENCE MEETING MINUTES**

ACTION: Commissioner Miletì made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kandiah Arulmoli, that:

*The Commission approve the minutes of the March 8 meeting as presented.*

\* Motion carried, 10 - 0.

## **VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Budget**

Chairman McGavin informed commissioners that Executive Director Richard McCarthy was not present because he was attending a meeting about a possible new partnership relationship for the Commission. He added that Mr. McCarthy will provide a briefing at the next meeting.

### **FEMA Appeal**

Chairman McGavin noted the Commission has requested permission to adjust and examine the Commission budget to help pay whatever amount needs to be reimbursed to the Office of Emergency Services regarding the Commission's FEMA appeal on its Northridge Earthquake report.

Commissioner Koch reported that the Commission presented its second appeal to FEMA on April 6, and the staff was able to provide ample information to show FEMA's previous decision was unfounded. She said OES is providing additional information to Nancy Ward at FEMA Region 9.

ACTION: No Action Taken

## **VIII. LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

Director of Legislative Affairs Larry Rillera advised that the Legislature has been busy, and he drew attention to his written report. He noted the Commission established its 2007 policy objectives at the January meeting, and he reviewed the status of each item. He reported that the Commission's Field Act report was sent to legislators and committee staff people. Commissioner David Thorman said a final draft will be forwarded to the governor soon.

Chairman McGavin said language in recent bond has been a problem in getting funds allocated for seismic mitigation. He noted that bond bills typically authorize spending "up to" a certain amount, which the Department of Finance has interpreted as zero since 1994.

Mr. Rillera indicated there were two pending bills pertaining to topics discussed earlier in the meeting: SB 5, calling for evaluation of levees and Delta flooding hazards, and another encouraging medical reciprocity arrangements.

Mr. Rillera reviewed and discussed the status of key bills identified in his staff report.

Chairman McGavin thanked Mr. Rillera for his report.

ACTION: No Action Required

## **IX. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Field Act Report**

Chairman McGavin noted after publishing its Field Act report, the Commission received an inquiry about the accuracy of the \$750 million damage figure cited in the report. Commissioner Lucy Jones did further research and found a report indicating that CSA Northridge spend \$407 million on recovery efforts after the Northridge earthquake. He said staff recommends issuing an erratum explaining and correcting the error, and commissioners agreed.

Staff Structural Engineer Henry Reyes indicated the electronic copy will be changed after the meeting.

### **Review of Enhanced State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan**

Chairman McGavin reported that the Commission requested more time to review and comment on the State Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Commissioner Koch said OES supports the Commission's request. She added that the plan addresses flood mitigation measures.

### **Research Grant Program Project Recommendations**

Commissioner Mileti reported that considerable progress has been made in identifying research priorities and establishing grant procedures. He said the Seismic Safety Commission will select research topics, write descriptions, and solicit proposals from potential grantees. He noted the Commission can contract with government agencies through memoranda of understanding or engage in bidding process with private contractors.

Commissioner Mileti reviewed and discussed the first tier of research priorities identified by the committee. He said topics include evaluating the efficacy of the Field Act, identifying earthquake injury mechanisms, studying household preparedness and mitigation, and tracking the progress of state agencies.

Commissioner Mileti provided an update on the statewide household "Get Ready" campaign. He drew attention to his written handout for a description of the proposed comprehensive statewide survey on household mitigation. He explained that the purpose of the survey is to obtain scientific information about the current state of household preparedness and help identify mitigation needs. He noted the information can then be applied to improve the effectiveness of public education.

Commissioner Mileti reported that OES has expressed interest in funding the survey, and the California Volunteer Corps will provide public education. Commissioner Mileti said the Seismic Safety Commission could play a useful role in helping to fine-tune the survey.

Commissioner Koch commented that the First Lady is very excited about this activity. She thanked Commissioner Mileti for his leadership. Commissioner Mileti commended the

Seismic Safety Commission and said he was delighted to see so many agencies working cooperatively.

Commissioner Bruce Clark noted that Kathleen Webb's name should be added to the committee roster.

Commissioner Mileti invited commissioners to submit further comments on the draft document.

Chairman McGavin thanked Commissioner Mileti for his report.

ACTION: No Action Required

## **X. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Kurt Beale, President, Gas Lock, Inc., recommended statewide implementation of gas shut-off valves. He noted there is a disconnect between state policy and what many local governments are doing, and he cited Contra Costa County and the City of Los Angeles as examples. Mr. Beale said the benefits of gas shut-off valves greatly outweigh their small cost. He urged the Seismic Safety Commission to advocate for mandatory gas shut-off valves in schools, hospitals, and senior facilities. He referred to his written comments for more details.

ACTION: No Action Required

Chairman McGavin thanked Mr. Schmid for his remarks.

## **XI. MISCELLANEOUS & GOOD OF MEETING**

Commissioner Clark noted the City of Newport Beach recently released a tsunami inundation map and other information about tsunami preparedness.

Chairman McGavin said the Commission would be touring a retrofit training facility in Stockton immediately after the meeting.

## **XII. ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:21 p.m.

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Sue Celli  
Office Manager

Approved by:

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Richard McCarthy  
Executive Director