

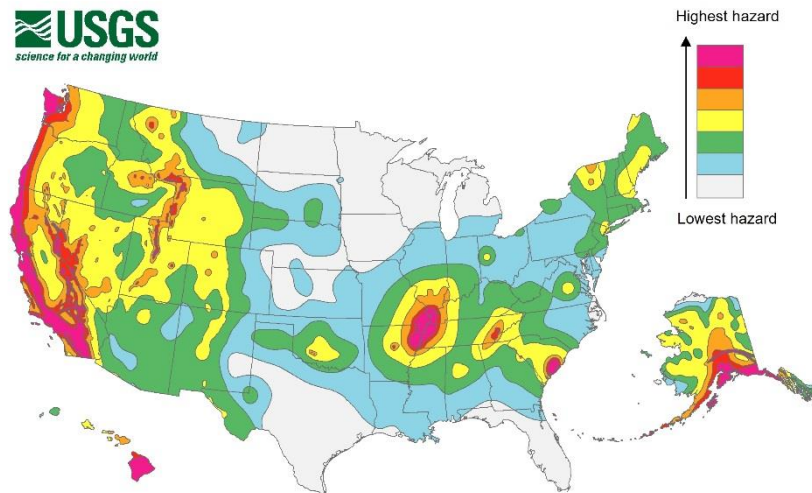
**NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
RESPONSE AND RECOVERY COMMITTEE
MITIGATION COMMITTEE**

POSITION PAPER

DATE: March 23, 2017

SUBJECT: Recommendations for Enhancing the Nation’s Ability to Mitigate, Prepare for, Respond to and Recover from Catastrophic Earthquakes.

DISCUSSION: Earthquakes occur with little to no warning and have the potential to cause enormous amounts of destruction and loss of life. The National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) is a partnership of four federal agencies, whose mission is to improve the nation's earthquake resilience in public safety, economic strength, and national security. An important part of that program is the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) National Seismic Hazard Map released in



2014. Using the best available science, the map shows that nearly every state in the U.S. is affected by earthquake ground shaking.

This map serves as a reminder of the NEHRP program’s value to the nation and the challenge of preparing for a natural disaster of potentially unprecedented proportions never seen in U.S. history.

Given the nature of the national earthquake threat, state emergency management agencies continue working extensively on catastrophic planning and have conducted three large homeland security exercises. These included the National Level Exercise that focused on the New Madrid seismic zone in 2011, the Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC) Capstone Exercise in 2014 and the Cascadia Rising Exercise held in the Pacific Northwest to test the

response to a 9.0 magnitude earthquake occurring along the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ). The lessons gleaned and tools and processes created from these exercises have fundamentally changed the way we plan for, respond to, and recover from disasters of all types.

Despite these successes, exercises also serve to identify the gaps in our systems and capabilities, as well as any inherent weaknesses in our critical infrastructure and life support systems. These exercises reveal that we are not adequately prepared as a nation for a catastrophic earthquake. Far too many structural vulnerabilities compromise our resilience, and NEHRP is potentially on a track which will not only see us lose the valuable gains we have made, but regress to a time that predates the establishment of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Encourage FEMA to maintain direct FEMA NEHRP direct State Assistance Program funding to enable State Earthquake Program Managers to successfully accomplish the intent of NEHRP. The State Assistance Program provided grant funds to States for core earthquake activities vital to the success of State programs. Without the funding of State Earthquake Programs, States' capability to protect lives and property could diminish.
2. Urge FEMA to establish and empower an Earthquake Program Office that coordinates all aspects of emergency management for earthquakes and develop earthquake program guidance that follows 44CFR 361, but is flexible enough to address regional program implementation priorities.
3. Collaborate with the NEMA Legislative Committee and FEMA to urge Congress to reauthorize the National Earthquake Hazard Reduction Program (NEHRP) with a shift in funding emphasis and priorities from research to practical implementation with a particular focus on enhancing the Nation's ability to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from catastrophic earthquakes.
4. FEMA should encourage increased emergency management representation on the NEHRP Advisory Committee on Earthquake Hazard Reduction (ACEHR). Emergency Management is currently under represented on ACEHR yet plays a critical role in earthquake preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation.

Moved: IL
Second: AK

DISPOSITION: PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "William J. Henkel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W".

Authenticated: _____
NEMA Secretary

NEMA 2017 Mid-Year Forum, March 19-24, Hilton Mark Center, Alexandria, VA