

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 26, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As you prepare your Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Budget for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), we strongly urge you to request increased funding for USGS's earthquake-related programs, including \$16.1 million for the development and operation of an on-shore West Coast Earthquake Early Warning (EEW) System.

Earthquake Early Warning is proven technology that is already fully operational in countries including Japan and Mexico. USGS, in conjunction with the California Institute of Technology; the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Washington; and the University of Oregon, is currently working to adapt the technology and has developed an on-shore prototype system for test users along the West Coast. The researchers are also working closely with key stakeholders, including the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system in San Francisco and Boeing and Microsoft in the Pacific Northwest, to test and provide feedback on what will be a very valuable system.

The 2014 magnitude 6.0 earthquake in Napa, California that caused an estimated \$300 million in damages is just one reminder of how important it is that the United States has a robust Earthquake Early Warning system. More recently, national media^[1] has reported on the prospects of a magnitude 9 earthquake in the Pacific Northwest and the utility of a warning system. When such an event occurs, it will be one of the most serious disasters the United States has faced. Once fully operational, EEW will provide critical time—from a few seconds to minutes—to take protective action. In fact, the Puget Sound and Portland would receive 1 to 5 minutes of warning—warning that will save lives.

Even with just seconds of warning before shaking begins, automated steps can be taken to prevent casualties and mitigate destruction, including slowing or stopping trains; turning off oil and natural gas pipelines; shutting down large manufacturing equipment; stopping elevators and opening their doors; and securing sensitive computer data.

The effectiveness of EEW depends on the number and placement of sensors to ensure that there is adequate coverage wherever an earthquake may hit—and this requires additional resources.

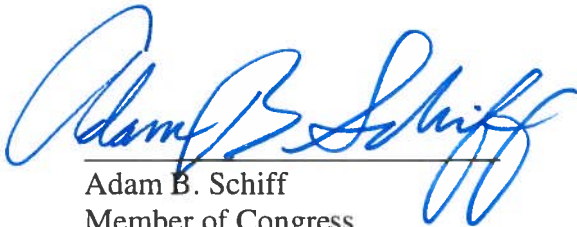
^[1] <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/07/20/the-really-big-one>; <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2015/09/the-disaster-next-time/403063/>

Congress recognizes the value of this system and has demonstrated its commitment to providing additional resources for EEW by including funding in the FY2015 Omnibus Appropriations Act and continued funding support in the House and Senate FY2016 Interior Appropriations bills.

While we appreciate past investments in earthquake programs and recognize the inclusion of EEW in your FY2016 Budget, full funding of EEW is critical. Therefore, we urge you to request in your FY2017 Budget \$16.1 million for the development of this system so that the West Coast will be prepared for the next catastrophic earthquake. It is important, however, that this EEW funding does not detract from other earthquake hazards programs, as this research works hand-in-hand with the EEW. This is proven technology that will save lives and reduce the economic impact of an earthquake; it simply needs to be properly funded.

Thank you for considering our request.

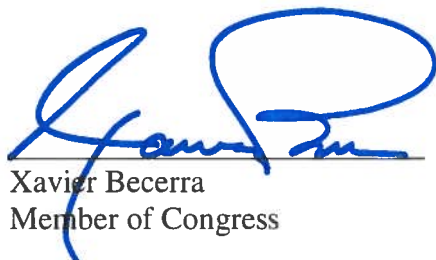
Sincerely,



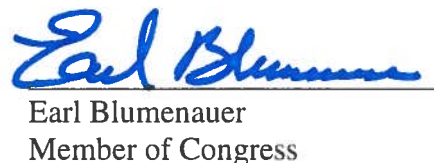
Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



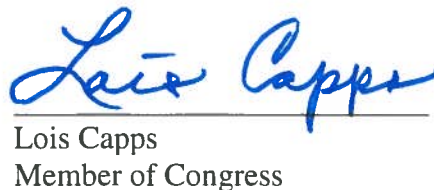
Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress



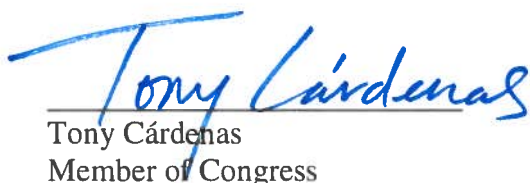
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Lois Capps
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



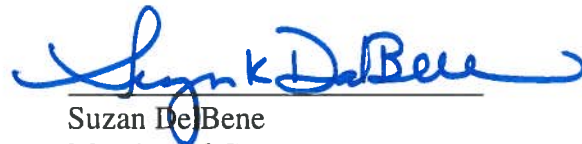
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
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Peter DeFazio
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Suzan DeBene
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
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Jackie Speier
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Eric Swalwell
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Mark Takano
Member of Congress


Mike Thompson
Member of Congress


Maxine Waters
Member of Congress


Raul Ruiz
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Shaun Donovan
Director of the Office of Management and Budget

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary of the Interior