



State Of California

ALFRED E. ALQUIST  
SEISMIC SAFETY COMMISSION



*Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor*

Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission  
Minutes of Special Teleconference Meeting  
February 11, 2009  
1755 Creekside Oaks Drive, Suite 100  
Sacramento, California

**Members Participating**

Mark Church, Chair  
Ken Cooley, Vice Chair  
Andrew Adelman  
Kandiah (Arul) Arulmoli  
William Chubb  
Lucy Jones  
Sharron Leason  
John Littrell  
Elizabeth Mathieson  
Brad Mitzelfelt  
Don Parker  
Ali Sadre  
Michael Stevens  
David Thorman  
David Walls

**Members Absent**

Jonathan Changus  
Christina Curry  
Dennis Mileti  
Gary McGavin  
James Schwab

**Staff Participating**

Richard McCarthy, Executive Director  
Karen Cogan, Executive Assistant

**I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Commission Chairman Mark Church called the meeting of the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission to order at 9:00 a.m. Administrative Officer Karen Cogan called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

**II. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Chairman Church noted that the Legislature was in session working on the state budget, and he expressed cautious optimism that the impasse would be resolved soon.

### **III. SEISMIC SAFETY ENGINEERING ASSESSMENT PILOT PROJECT FOR K THROUGH 12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

#### **Funding Redirection**

Executive Director Richard McCarthy explained that the purpose of this special meeting was to consider a proposal to redirect funds from the Science Center research project to help pay for pilot project to conduct engineering studies of the most vulnerable public schools in California. He noted that although Proposition 1D allocated \$199.5 million for public school retrofit projects, budgeting constraints have prevented most of the eligible schools from applying for the funds, and as a result, little has been done to improve the seismic safety of the state's most vulnerable public schools. He suggested that the Commission approve transfer of \$200,000 from the Science Center's "Green Technology at Home" exhibit for this purpose, a concept endorsed by Secretary Rosario Marin. Mr. McCarthy advised that the Science Center agreed to reduce its overhead expenses from 25 percent to 20 percent, for a savings of \$100,000. He clarified that the redirected funds can be restored to the Science Center from next year's research budget if needed.

Mr. McCarthy introduced Mr. Rob Cook, Executive Officer, Office of Public School Construction (OPSC), and invited Mr. Cook to discuss the proposal in more detail.

Mr. Cook said that in order to qualify for Proposition 1D funds, school facilities must meet certain criteria which include buildings that house students, sites subject to shaking of at least 1.7 g in major earthquakes, and an engineering report to confirm their vulnerability to collapse. He said the costs of the engineering studies have been a major obstacle in funding retrofit projects, as evidenced by the fact that only one of the 36 eligible facilities has applied so far. He advised that OPSC's funds have been frozen, so the state is unable to provide assistance for these initial studies. He asked the Commission to provide \$200,000 to produce the necessary engineering reports.

Commissioner Ken Cooley expressed support for providing this seed money for the state's most vulnerable schools to conduct initial engineering studies. He commented that cash-strapped school districts are unwilling to spend money to prove eligibility without any assurance of being awarded Proposition 1D funding. He said the funds will be used to develop a systematic and simplified way of evaluating building vulnerabilities that can be applied to future school retrofit projects. Commissioner Cooley pointed out that this funding proposal is consistent with the Seismic Safety Commission's overall objectives, the initiatives identified in the California Earthquake Loss Reduction Plan, the state research plan, and it will help address a critical barrier to improving seismic safety.

Mr. Cook estimated that engineering studies would cost \$8,000 to \$10,000 per facility.

Mr. Cook advised that the Los Angeles Unified School District has already begun assessing its most vulnerable facilities, and LAUSD officials have offered to share their experience and cost estimates from that process. He added that there is general agreement that Proposition 1D funds should be used to address the worst buildings first.

Chairman Church noted the question before the Commission is whether to redirect \$200,000 from the Science Center green technology project and reduce the overhead for the Science Center from 25% to 20%. He expressed his opinion that the fund transfer was an important first step in making California's K through 12 public schools safer.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Cooley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Arulmoli, that:

*The Commission adopt the staff's recommendation to redirect the funds as proposed.*

\* Motion carried, 15 – 0.

Chairman Church thanked Mr. Cook for participating in the special meeting.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 8, 2009 MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner Michael Stevens drew attention to Section V and the description of the public television research project. In the third paragraph, he noted the reference to the American Institute of Architects should be changed to American Insurance Association.

Commissioner Mathieson recalled that after Ms. Curry Mayer's presentation about the Standardized Emergency Management System, she pointed out that the 17 essential functions listed mention input from scientists in the planning stages, but not during a disaster. She noted that in the case of a landslide blocking a river, for examples, scientists could provide important advice about evacuations and other response activities. Commissioner Mathieson asked that her substantive recommendation to use scientific input as an emergency is evolving be included in the minutes.

Chairman Church requested that Commissioner Mathieson provide some draft language to the staff.

**ACTION:** Commissioner Cooley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sadre, that:

*The Commission approve the minutes of the January 8 Commission meeting as amended.*

\* Motion carried, 15– 0.

#### **V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no members of the public who wished to address the Commission.

**VI. MISCELLANEOUS AND GOOD OF THE MEETING**

Mr. McCarthy informed commissioners that representatives from the California Emergency Management Agency (formerly the Office of Emergency Services) contacted the Commission on February 10 and indicated that Cal EMA would be contributing \$500,000 for the California Public Television research project. He said the staff would be meeting the following week with people from Cal EMA, the California Volunteers, and the California Broadcast Association to discuss the proposal in more detail. Mr. McCarthy noted that with the \$500,000 from Cal EMA, the Commission’s research funding, and money from the California Earthquake Authority and the Department of Insurance, the project will have nearly \$1 million.

Mr. McCarthy said representatives from the Northern California 1869 Hayward Earthquake Alliance and the Southern California ShakeOut group, as well as people from Cal EMA and the California Volunteers organization, would be meeting with Secretary Marin on February 17 to discuss a proposal to shift attention from April as the state’s annual earthquake preparedness month to a one-day statewide preparedness event, an idea suggested by Secretary Marin after visiting Japan. He commented that the California Public Television project will be a major help with the preparedness campaign

Ms. Cogan informed commissioners that she would be sending information regarding field trips and hotel arrangements for the March meeting in the San Diego area. She asked commissioners to let the staff know as soon as possible which field trips they were interested in attending.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Church thanked commissioners for participating in the special meeting. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

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Sue Celli  
Office Manager

Approved by:

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Richard McCarthy  
Executive Director