



State Of California

ALFRED E. ALQUIST
SEISMIC SAFETY COMMISSION



Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor

Minutes of Meeting
May 14, 2009
State Capitol, Room 4202
Sacramento, California

Members Participating

Mark Church, Chair
Ken Cooley, Vice Chair (arrived at 9:10 a.m.)
Andrew Adelman
Kandiah (Arul) Arulmoli
Jonathan Changus (arrived at 9:05 a.m.)
William Chubb
Christina Curry
Lucy Jones
Sharron Leason
John Littrell (arrived at 9:05 a.m.)
Brad Mitzelfelt
Gary McGavin
Dennis Mileti
Ali Sadre (arrived at 9:05 a.m.)
Michael Stevens
David Thorman
David Walls

Members Absent

Elizabeth Mathieson
Don Parker
James Schwab

Staff Participating

Richard McCarthy, Executive Director
Karen Cogan, Executive Assistant
Robert Anderson, Staff Geologist
Henry Reyes, Structural Engineer
Fred Turner, Senior Structural Engineer

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Commission Chairman Mark Church called the meeting of the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission to order at 9:01 a.m. Executive Assistant Karen Cogan called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

II. CHAIRMAN’S REMARKS

Chairman Church remarked that the state was facing very challenging times, with budget shortfalls now estimated at \$8 billion to \$15 billion if the propositions on the May 19 ballot pass, and \$21 billion if the ballot measures fail. He said the Governor would be releasing his revised budget later that day. He warned that both state and local governments can expect dire consequences and serious cuts, which could affect the Commission’s research program.

III. ALQUIST-PRIOLO ACT UPDATE

Executive Director Richard McCarthy noted that at the last meeting, the Commission asked for an update on the changes to the Alquist-Priolo Act currently under consideration. He introduced Dr. John Parrish, State Geologist, California Geological Survey (CGS), and Mr. Stephen Testa, Executive Officer, State Mining and Geology Board, and invited them to address the Commission.

Dr. Parrish explained that the Alquist-Priolo Act, enacted in 1972 after the San Fernando earthquake produced severe fault ruptures that caused damage to many structures, requires the state to map surface fault ruptures and prohibits building on active faults. To help implement the Act, the State Mining and Geology Board was established to set policies, and the Seismic Safety Commission is charged with advising the Board on seismic safety issues.

Mr. Testa described the history and makeup of the State Mining and Geology Board. He stated that the nine members of the Board represent different geosciences disciplines and serve staggered four-year terms. He noted that since its inception in 1985, the Board has overseen implementation of the Alquist-Priolo Act and interpreted its provisions. Mr. Testa reviewed the key provisions of the Alquist-Priolo Act: mapping of surface fault ruptures by CGS, prohibiting construction on active faults, and requiring geological reports before local agencies can issue permits for buildings in high-hazard zones. He noted the Act exempts single-family dwellings and other buildings of certain dimensions.

Mr. Testa reported that CGS has mapped between 5,000 and 15,000 active faults in California, representing about .001 percent of the surface area of the state. He estimated that about 4,500 linear miles in California have been zoned pursuant to the Alquist-Priolo Act. He said CGS reviewed the Act in 1991 and concluded that it was effective in addressing seismic safety and identifying geotechnical issues of concern.

Mr. Testa advised that in 2006, the City of Camarillo questioned the prohibition against building on active faults and requested an interpretation of what constitutes an active fault. He stated that since 1984, the Alquist-Priolo Act's prohibition against building on active faults has been interpreted to require a 50-foot minimum setback from active faults. In response to Camarillo's request, he noted, the Board's Geohazards Committee established a 16-member Technical Advisory Committee in 2007 to analyze these questions. Mr. Testa said the Technical Advisory Committee's four working groups are focusing on the qualifications of those who produce geologic reports, whether avoidance of faults is a better strategy than mitigation, how faults are characterized, and jurisdictional issues.

Mr. Testa reported that the Technical Advisory Committee surveyed lead agencies and held a conference in February 2009 to discuss evaluation of risk and mitigation possibilities. He said the next step for the Technical Advisory Committee will be drafting an outline; the committee expects to complete a report sometime next fall. He invited the Seismic Safety Commission and the California Earthquake Authority to participate and provide input to the Technical Advisory Committee for inclusion in the final report.

Chairman Church expressed his appreciation to Dr. Parrish and Mr. Testa for their presentation.

Mr. Testa thanked the Commission and Staff Geologist Bob Anderson for their assistance.

IV. APPROVAL OF MARCH 12, 2009 MEETING MINUTES

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

The Commission approve the minutes of the March 12 Commission meeting as presented.

* Motion carried, 17– 0.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Budget Update

Mr. McCarthy indicated that Governor Schwarzenegger would be releasing his revised budget later that day with two options, one in the event the ballot propositions pass and the other a more dire scenario in case the measures fail.

Mr. McCarthy reported that the Commission's budget was on track. He drew attention to budget projection tables provided by Contracted Fiscal Services and the staff. He noted that the Commission has not yet billed for any overhead costs related to the research program. He stated that one research project has already been completed, and several more should be concluded early in the next fiscal year. Mr. McCarthy indicated he would have more to report at the July meeting about the availability of federal stimulus funds and competitive grants.

Personnel - SSM I Position

Mr. McCarthy advised that the Commission had received a six-month extension to fill the vacant legislative position, so efforts will be made to readvertise the opening and recruit candidates.

Annual Report

Mr. McCarthy reported that the Commission's 2008 annual report had been approved by the State and Consumer Services Agency and the Governor's Office. He thanked and congratulated Ms. Cogan for getting the report submitted and approved in a timely fashion.

Commissioner Appointments

Mr. McCarthy noted that some commissioners had been contacted for reappointment interviews. He thanked all commissioners whose terms were expiring and encouraged those interested in continuing on the Commission to reapply.

September 9-10 Commission Meeting - Monterey

Mr. McCarthy informed the Commission that the staff was making arrangements to hold the September meeting in Central California. He asked commissioners to save the dates of September 9 and 10.

October 17 Activities - 20-Year Anniversary of Loma Prieta

Mr. McCarthy said a major conference was being planned in the Bay Area in October to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake. He suggested that the Commission hold a meeting in San Francisco in conjunction with the conference. After some discussion, the Commission proposed scheduling a meeting for Thursday, October 15.

ACTION: Commissioner Jones made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Arulmoli, that:

The Commission meet on October 15 in San Francisco as proposed.

* Motion carried, 17 - 0.

Mr. McCarthy remarked that the Commission's Website is now the first link provided on Google for the topic of "seismic safety." He congratulated the Commission on achieving this prominent status.

October 21 AT&T Exercise in San Diego

Mr. McCarthy invited Commissioner William Chubb to inform commissioners about the AT&T exercise planned for October 21.

Commissioner Chubb announced that AT&T's Network Disaster Recovery Team will be holding a drill in San Diego on October 21 to practice disaster communications capabilities. He said AT&T stores communications equipment in warehouses worldwide and has specially trained individuals who are rapidly deployed to disaster areas to establish communications networks when conventional telephone systems are down. He invited the Commission and staff to attend the exercise, and offered to arrange a VIP tour.

Commissioner Chubb stated that the self-contained disaster teams are scalable for use in disasters of all sizes. He said teams first establish a command center, and then work to provide satellite communications, cell service, and then land lines.

Legislative Update

Mr. McCarthy noted that Assemblyman Blakeslee is now the minority leader in the Assembly. He invited Commissioner Jonathan Changus to provide a brief description of key pieces of legislation introduced by Assemblyman Blakeslee.

Commissioner Changus reported that Assemblyman Blakeslee's proposed high-speed rail bond with an early warning component has been held in committee hearings and will not be moving forward this session. He said there are still three active bills and one resolution that would be of interest to the Commission. Commissioner Changus advised that AB 280 addresses how federal stimulus funds will be used in California and institutes a California Earthquake Authority (CEA) program to retrofit soft-story multi-family buildings; AB 43 removes the current cap on CEA staffing to allow the CEA to hire more full-time employees and appoint a chief mitigations officer; and a third bill requires PG&E to follow up on the AB 1632 investigation of nuclear power plant safety by further studies and mapping of a newly discovered offshore fault near Diablo Canyon. He noted that Assembly Joint Resolution 1 encourages federal and state agencies to cooperate on mitigation efforts.

Mr. McCarthy asked if the nuclear power plant bill includes the San Onofre nuclear power plant as well as Diablo Canyon. Commissioner Changus replied that the impetus for the bill was the discovery of a second offshore fault near Diablo Canyon, so the bill is limited to that plant.

VI. CALIFORNIA EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS SURVEY UPDATE

Mr. McCarthy invited Commissioner Mileti and Professor Linda Bourque to present the results of the statewide survey on household preparedness and mitigation. He said this important research was funded by the Commission's research program, the California Emergency Management Agency, and the California Volunteers organization. He drew attention to the draft survey report in the meeting packet and the more detailed survey results distributed by Commissioner Mileti.

Commissioner Mileti introduced Professor Bourque and commended her for completing the most comprehensive nationwide study of mitigation and preparedness ever produced. He said the California Earthquake Preparedness Survey conducted by the UCLA School of Public Health and Survey Research Center will be used to shape future public outreach and education efforts that will improve the seismic safety of the state.

Professor Bourque stated that the primary objective of the household mitigation survey was to examine people's behavior and determine what steps had actually been taken to prepare for major earthquakes. She said the respondents were broken into three groups, representing 10 counties in Northern California, 6 counties in Southern California, and the 42 remaining counties in the state. Respondents were asked about sources of information they received, types of information, cues that motivated preparedness actions, beliefs in earthquake myths, and impacts of official notifications. Professor Bourque drew attention to the survey findings and recommendations.

Professor Bourque noted that most people surveyed had learned how to be safe in earthquakes, and most had taken steps to store emergency supplies and equipment, but fewer had created emergency plans, participated in training, or practiced response actions. She advised that most respondents had not mitigated risks by securing building contents, protecting structures, or purchasing earthquake insurance.

Chairman Church thanked Professor Bourque for her thorough report. Commissioner Mileti observed that the UCLA household mitigation survey was one of the most perfect and accurate surveys ever to be conducted, and he expressed his hope that its findings will benefit the state.

VII. DELTA RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT

Mr. Sean Bagheban, engineer, Department of Water Resources (DWR), presented the results of the Delta Risk Management Strategy (DRMS) project, a study undertaken by DWR to identify and characterize the Delta's risks from earthquake, floods, and climate change and to analyze the potential impacts of those disasters. He stated that the DRMS project entailed two phases, the first focusing on identifying risks and the second on possible mitigation solutions and recommendations.

Mr. Bagheban displayed a map of the Delta, created by the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. He noted this waterway handles almost 50 percent of the state's total runoff and provides thousands of homes and businesses with drinking water; in addition, the Delta also serves an important role in agriculture and recreation. He said that in its natural state, the Delta comprises a network of channels, sloughs, and islands; in its current modern state, the area also contains important man-made structures like reservoirs, gates, barriers, pumps, levees, railroad lines, highways, gas lines, and high-voltage transmission lines. Mr. Bagheban showed a map of land surface elevations and pointed out that 4,000 to 5,000 acres below sea level are protected by levees. He also displayed a map of earthquake faults running through the region.

Mr. Bagheban said the DRMS project came about in response to AB 1200, enacted in 2005, requiring the state to assess risk and analyze the Delta's vulnerability to failure. DWR hired a consultant to develop a scope of work, publish 13 technical memoranda, and draft a report summarizing the results of the analysis. Mr. Bagheban noted that the executive report released in March 2009 concluded that California's levee system was not sustainable and was likely to suffer substantial failures in major earthquakes. He observed that because there have been no recent levee failures due to earthquakes, many people minimize the seriousness of the hazard.

Mr. Bagheban presented a chart of major earthquakes since the 1800's and noted there is a greater than 65 percent probability of a large earthquake within the next 25 years. He said rising sea levels and high-water conditions can also cause levee failures, and some of the levees are vulnerable to failure in dry-weather conditions. Mr. Bagheban showed a chart depicting island-flooding probabilities with estimates of the likely cost and duration of repairs.

Mr. Bagheban said the second phase of the DRMS project focuses on risk reduction studies. He advised that DWR plans to hold three public workshops next fall, and a final report will be released in several months.

Chairman Church thanked Mr. Bagheban for his presentation.

VIII. HOSPITAL BUILDING SAFETY BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

Ms. Linda Janssen, Executive Director, Hospital Building Safety Board, stated that the role of the Hospital Building Safety Board is to advise the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development's Facilities Development Division (FDD) with respect to issues that affect the structural safety of hospitals in California. She referred to the report in the meeting packet summarizing the Hospital Building Safety Board's accomplishments and activities during 2008. She observed that 2008 was not a very active year, but said the Board has a new chair and FDD has a new deputy director, so more will be happening in 2009.

Ms. Janssen reported that the Board plans to add three new committees focusing on standard details, seminars and education, and executive projects, and the number of committee meetings will double in 2009. She distributed a handout listing the Board's 2009 goals, committees, and meeting calendar. She said the Board is now posting copies of minutes and meeting materials on its Website.

Chairman Church thanked Ms. Janssen for her report.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

X. MISCELLANEOUS AND GOOD OF THE MEETING

Commissioner Cooley informed the Commission that he would not be seeking reappointment to the Commission when his term expires in May. He explained that he left his position with the City of Rancho Cordova due to budget cuts and had planned an early retirement, but he was subsequently been hired as the primary consultant to the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee, a position that will entail considerable work. He said he also stepped down from his position as the first vice president of the League of California Cities. Commissioner Cooley announced that he would be resigning from the Commission effective May 15. He added that he will miss the Commission and expressed wholehearted support of the important work the Commission does for the State of California.

Chairman Church commented that Commissioner Cooley's departure will be a huge loss for the Commission. He thanked Commissioner Cooley for his dedicated service and congratulated him on his new appointment. He indicated that the Commission would recognize Commissioner Cooley at a future meeting.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Sue Celli
Office Manager

Approved by:

Richard McCarthy
Executive Director