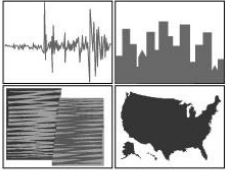


NEHRP Coalition



National Earthquake Hazards
Reduction Program Coalition

March 23, 2011

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rockefeller and Ranking Member Hutchison:

We are writing on behalf of the nation's earthquake professionals - scientists, engineers, architects, building code officials, and emergency management and response leaders - to urge the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation to move forward on the reauthorization of the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP). NEHRP makes Americans safer and our Nation more secure and financially stronger by implementing the results and insight from research in the earth and behavioral sciences, public policy, and engineering.

For More Information:
202/789-7850 (ASCE)
510/451-0905 (EERI)
www.nehrp.org



The NEHRP Coalition encourages realistic, comprehensive, and affordable measures to reduce the harmful effects of earthquakes nationwide. The Coalition represents the views of over 250,000 scientists, engineers, architects, and emergency response leaders of the earthquake community.

Members of the NEHRP Coalition have been working with your Committee staff and have provided comments on S. 646 "The Natural Hazards Risk Reduction Act of 2011". The Coalition supports the intent of the bill and we believe it is imperative for Congress to move as quickly as possible on reauthorization. We are concerned that reductions in the authorizing levels will cause delays in achieving the goals of the NEHRP Strategic Plan, namely, a nation that is earthquake-resilient in public safety, economic strength, and national security, cannot be realized. The nation's risk to losses due to earthquakes, tsunamis and other cascading events will therefore be much greater than previous policy goals have deemed acceptable for our Nation. Your committee can send a strong message to the Administration and appropriations committees, that addressing the Nation's earthquake risk is a priority.

Reauthorized by Public Law 108-360 in 2004, the program underwent the most significant changes in its history including a change in leadership, the creation of the Interagency Coordinating Council, and the Advisory Committee on Earthquake Hazards Reduction. These are changes that the community supported and believes have and will continue to pay important dividends for the nation. This authorization expired in October of 2009. As recent events in Japan have shown, well designed and constructed buildings can withstand large magnitude earthquakes and powerful tsunamis, yet buildings and infrastructure either not

meeting modern engineering standards and/or that are poorly sited lead to catastrophic damage, tragic suffering and financial loss. The knowledge and implementation elements of the NEHRP program help Americans reduce these losses.

Created by Congress in 1977, NEHRP has provided the resources and leadership that have led to significant advances in understanding the risk earthquakes pose and the best ways to counter them. Through NEHRP, the federal government has engaged in seismic monitoring, mapping, research, testing, engineering and related reference materials for code development, mitigation, and emergency preparedness. NEHRP has served as the backbone for protecting U.S. citizens, their property and the national economy from the devastating effects of large earthquakes. Although NEHRP is well known for its research programs, it is also the source for hundreds of new technologies, maps, design techniques, and standards that are used by design professionals every day to mitigate risks and save lives, protect property, and reduce adverse economic impacts.

NEHRP is a well-run program that has successfully reduced the risk of earthquakes through the cohesive efforts of four federal agencies: the National Science Foundation (NSF), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The 2004 reauthorization made the most significant changes to date to the 30-year program. Generally speaking, although disappointed in the appropriation levels over the past several years, the community is pleased with the changes made to the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views. The coalition looks forward to working with you and members of the Committee staff in order to complete work. If the Coalition can be of more assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Martin Hight, the American Society of Civil Engineers' Senior Manager of Government Relations at 202-789-7843 or mhight@asce.org.

American Council of Engineering Companies
American Geological Institute
American Geophysical Union
American Institute of Architects
American Society of Civil Engineers
Applied Technology Council
Consortium of Universities for Research in Earthquake Engineering
Earthquake Engineering Research Institute
International Code Council
MCEER (Multidisciplinary Center for Earthquake Engineering Research)
National Emergency Management Association
National Fire Protection Association
Portland Cement Association
Seismological Society of America
Western States Seismic Policy Council