



ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

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CITY OF LOS ANGELES

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MAYOR GARCETTI ANNOUNCES EARTHQUAKE PLAN FOR LOS ANGELES

Read the Resilience by Design Report at www.lamayor.org/earthquakes

LOS ANGELES – Mayor Eric Garcetti today released Resilience by Design - a plan to address the city’s greatest earthquake vulnerabilities, including building retrofitting and steps to secure our water supply and communications infrastructure.

Mayor Garcetti’s Science Advisor for Seismic Safety Dr. Lucy Jones, a renowned United States Geological Survey seismologist, led the development of this report and assembled technical experts and consulted with businesses, property owners and other stakeholders to help inform the City’s action steps. Dr. Jones was appointed in January, under a unique partnership with the US Geological Survey.

“Los Angeles has always been an epicenter of seismic risk,” Mayor Garcetti said. “But today we are taking bold action to make LA an epicenter of earthquake preparedness, resilience and safety. Instead of being complacent and then jarred into action by a devastating earthquake, LA is moving forward proactively with a comprehensive package of preparedness and resiliency measures to fortify our buildings, protect our water supply, and keep our telecommunications online when the ‘Big One’ hits.”

Mayor Garcetti's plan would require retrofitting of two types of vulnerable buildings. Retrofits would be required within 5 years at "soft-first-story" buildings built prior to 1980, and retrofits would be required within 25 years at "non-ductile reinforced concrete" buildings built prior to 1980.

The plan recommends significant investments in fortifying our city's water supply, including developing an alternative water system for firefighting, protecting our aqueducts that cross the San Andreas Fault, increasing local water sources, and developing a network of resilient pipes.

The plan also calls for upgrades to our city's telecommunications network to enable Internet and mobile connectivity after an earthquake, including creating partnerships with providers for shared broadband services after disasters, protecting power systems at fault crossings, creating a solar-powered citywide Wi-Fi network to avoid power disruptions, and fortifying cell phone towers.

"We acknowledge that we cannot prevent 100% of the losses in an earthquake. What we are trying to do is prevent the catastrophic collapse of our economy by addressing the biggest vulnerabilities," said Dr. Lucy Jones. "And if all of these recommendations are enacted, I believe that Los Angeles will not just survive the next large earthquake but we will be able to recover quickly and thrive."

You can read an executive summary and the entire Resilience by Design report at www.lamayor.org/earthquake

"As one of the premiere organizations representing commercial building owners, BOMA Greater Los Angeles has appreciated the strong leadership provided by Mayor Eric Garcetti and Dr. Lucy Jones on seismic retrofit. The process has been open and collaborative, which is crucial to enhancing building resilience, protecting tenants and preserving a vital economic base in Los Angeles," said Michele Ware, President of the Building Owners and Management Association of Greater Los Angeles.

"The Department of Building and Safety is committed to ensuring the success of this endeavor to making the City of Los Angeles a safer city and more resilient after a catastrophic event. The department will establish a specialized unit dedicated to implementing the recommendations contained within this report. Services provided by this unit will include preparation of construction retrofit standards, easy-to-follow guidelines, public outreach workshops, and expedited plan review and inspection approval process," said Raymond Chan, General Manager of the Department of Building and Safety.

“The US Resiliency Council is fully supportive of the Mayor’s recommended program that includes the voluntary use of the USRC Building Rating System for the Earthquake Performance of Buildings. The voluntary use of a building rating system that communicates the risk of earthquake hazards in consistent, reliable, and understandable terms will inform owners, tenants, buyers and sellers, lenders and insurers, and policy makers, about the performance of the buildings in which they live, work and invest. LA City will be the first city in the world to adopt the Rating System and it will bring market forces to bear on the long term resilience of the City. This is a bold and important development.

“The public generally holds to the misconception that a building built to modern codes in California is 'earthquake proof.' In fact, even the current code is only intended to produce buildings that avoid collapse in a large, rare event such as a repeat of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. The possibility that hundreds or thousands of newer structures might be left uninhabitable, nonfunctional and essentially total losses after such an event nonetheless conforms to the Building Code's intent, even though such an outcome would not meet the public's expectations, who expect their communities and businesses to rebound quickly. Christchurch, New Zealand was a very recent example of a major city in an earthquake prone area that was subjected to its maximum credible earthquake. Only two buildings collapsed during the February 2011 event, but 70% of the buildings in the downtown have now been demolished,” said Ron Mayes, Executive Director of the United States Resiliency Council.

“The Structural Engineers Association of Southern California (SEAOSC), representing the local structural engineering community, greatly commends Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and his office for the leadership in partnering with building owners to improve the city’s seismic resilience through implementation of new mandatory earthquake retrofit programs. These new programs will improve the earthquake performance of some of Los Angeles’s more vulnerable buildings that could collapse during a major earthquake. Los Angeles during the last year has undertaken the tremendous task of understanding the earthquake collapse risks associated with Soft-Story Wood Framed Buildings and Non-Ductile Concrete Buildings. The City has sought the expertise of the structural engineering community on how to structurally address these issues, while also partnering with building owners for implementing timelines to complete the seismic retrofitting programs for these types of buildings. Thereby bringing the Los Angeles community together, enhancing the performance of these earthquake vulnerable buildings which is critical to Los Angeles Cities disaster resiliency planning.

"We congratulate the Mayor's office for taking the stance that Los Angeles will be the first city in the nation to rate the earthquake performance of publicly owned buildings. Once rated and publicly posted, the ratings will help Angelinos' understand the City's commitment to safe public buildings and hopefully encourage other building owners to get their buildings rated as well. This commitment and the implementation of retrofit programs to enhance earthquake performance and increase public awareness is critical to the resiliency and sustainability of the greater Los Angeles community. SEAOSC is proud to have been able to assist Mayor Garcetti, Dr. Lucy Jones, the Los Angeles City Department of Building and Safety, as well as the Los Angeles community in these important efforts," said Michael Cochran, President of the Structural Engineers Association of California.

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