



# EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING RESEARCH INSTITUTE

## Board of Directors

Ian G. Buckle, *President*  
L. Thomas Tobin, *Past President*  
David A. Friedman, *Vice President*  
Janiele Maffei, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Scott Ashford  
Kenneth J. Elwood  
Roberto T. Leon

Kathleen Tierney  
Ivan Wong

**Executive Director**  
Jay Berger

October 30, 2013

Dr. Steven McKnight  
Division Director  
National Science Foundation  
Division of Civil, Mechanical, and Manufacturing Innovation  
4201 Wilson Blvd, Suite 545  
Arlington, VA 22230

Dear Dr. McKnight,

It has come to our attention that the National Science Foundation has decided not to make an award in the recent NEES2 Ops Competition, but instead will develop an alternate plan for the support of natural hazards research 'at such times as may be appropriate.'

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute I am writing to express our deepest concern about this decision and the lack of specifics or a timeline for the announcement of an alternate plan. Since 1948, EERI has served as the preeminent U.S. institution for earthquake professionals and represents almost 3,000 members from both the academic and practice communities. EERI played an active role in the establishment of the George E. Brown Jr. Network for Earthquake Engineering Simulation (NEES) more than a decade ago, and has watched it grow and mature into a remarkably successful program in earthquake risk reduction.

Since its creation, NEES has become a key part of a community-wide effort to enhance the seismic resilience of the nation and has played a unique and essential role in this regard. It is well established that NEES created a national, shared-use resource of well-managed, next-generation laboratories, cyberinfrastructure, and expertise to address challenges in earthquake engineering. It represents a large investment of the nation's resources and limitless contributions from the earthquake engineering community in the form of time, talent, expertise, and hard work. Its intellectual contributions range from a wealth of invaluable data in the NEES central data repository (over 2 million files in the Project Warehouse) derived from more than 400 projects conducted by the Network, to information technology tools and resources, and from hundreds of graduate and undergraduate students educated in NEES facilities, to over 1800 publications resulting from NEES work. Together these products have transformed the way earthquake engineering research is carried out in the U.S. and has advanced the state-of-the-art immeasurably.

But there is much more to be done and it is therefore of the gravest concern, that NSF has postponed, indefinitely, continued support of the NEES infrastructure. This decision has created a climate of uncertainty regarding the future of support beyond September 30, 2014. Personnel key to the future of earthquake engineering research and the operation of the NEES facilities, have begun to look elsewhere for employment. Loss of these highly skilled individuals will have significant repercussions on being able to complete existing NEES1 projects by September 30, as well as being able to retain critical skills in cyberinfrastructure, management, and experimental simulation to support advances in earthquake risk reduction beyond September 2014.

499 14<sup>TH</sup> Street, Suite 220, Oakland, California 94612-1934

☎ (510) 451-0905 FAX (510) 451-5411 eeri@eeri.org <http://www.eeri.org>

a nonprofit corporation

EERI therefore urges NSF to develop and announce this plan expeditiously so as to minimize the erosion of talent and restore confidence in the future funding of earthquake engineering research. If EERI can help in any way to complete this plan, please do not hesitate to contact either the undersigned or Jay Berger, Executive Director, at [jberger@eeri.org](mailto:jberger@eeri.org) (510-451-0905).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ian Buckle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ian" and last name "Buckle" clearly legible.

Ian Buckle  
President  
[igbuckle@unr.edu](mailto:igbuckle@unr.edu)  
775-784-1519

Cc: Dr Joy Pauschke  
Program Director  
National Science Foundation  
Division of Civil, Mechanical, and Manufacturing Innovation  
4201 Wilson Blvd, Suite 545  
Arlington, VA 22230

Dr. George A. Hazelrigg  
Deputy Division Director  
National Science Foundation  
Division of Civil, Mechanical, and Manufacturing Innovation  
4201 Wilson Blvd, Suite 545  
Arlington, VA 22230

EERI Board of Directors