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Press Release

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## **National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2018 signed into law by President Trump**

*The National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2018, the first reauthorization of NEHRP in 9 years, sends a clear political message that earthquake risk reduction remains an important priority for our nation.*

### **For Immediate Release**

**Oakland, CA: December 12, 2018** — The National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2018 (NEHRP18) was signed into law by President Trump on Tuesday, December 11, 2018. The law represents a revitalization of the Nation's premier 45 year old earthquake hazard reduction program and provides a clear political message that earthquake risk reduction remains a priority for the nation. The bill ( S.1768 and HR 6650), which passed unanimously through the Senate and house this fall , was co-sponsored by Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

"NEHRP Reauthorization is a big step forward for our nation's seismic resilience. The goalpost has moved from merely surviving a major earthquake, to maintaining quality of life, preventing damage to structures and infrastructure, and reducing economic hardship. The law includes many new features that are important for the expansion of the NEHRP program to meet our 21<sup>st</sup> century needs," said Heidi Tremayne, Executive Director of the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute.

The National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program provides funding to USGS, NIST, NSF and FEMA to define the size and damage potential of earthquakes, develop technologically and economically feasible design and construction methods, and develop implementation programs, related publications, and mitigation techniques. This five-year reauthorization makes significant program reforms and enhancements , modernizes the language related to earthquake prediction and early warning systems, better defines coordination among federal and state legislation, commissions a comprehensive study of the program's effectiveness and funding levels.

The Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) has long advocated for NEHRP and all reauthorizations and again assisted in the bill's development. Collaborating with partners in the engineering and natural hazards communities, as well as incorporating recommendations developed by the Advisory Committee on Earthquake Hazards Reduction (ACEHR), specific enhancements put forth by EERI include:

- The findings now record that the nation is not prepared to remain operational or recover under any specific schedule and that the National Research Council reported that annual funding of approximately \$300,000,000 is needed for 20 years to achieve the program's research, preparedness, and mitigation goals.
- The *Purpose* was expanded to include increasing the resilience of communities and to point out the need to develop new planning codes along with model building codes.

- A definition for “Community Resilience” was added. "Lifelines" are now more accurately referred to as "lifeline infrastructure."
- A full review of the program, the activities of the program agencies, and the effectiveness of its application to both public and private earthquake risk and hazard reduction activities by the Comptroller General is now required to be submitted to the Congress within 3 years. This report should point out the need for the program's further expansion and additional funding.
- FEMA and NIST are directed to convene a committee of experts to recommend options for improving the built environment and critical infrastructure needed to support community recovery and resilience. This is expected to lead to the development of a new generation of functional recovery codes and standards for all components of the built environment.

For more information and to updates, please visit the [EERI Legislative Action Center](#).

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*The Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) is a national, nonprofit, technical society of engineers, geoscientists, architects, planners, public officials, and social scientists. EERI members include researchers, practicing professionals, educators, government officials, and building code regulators. The objective of EERI is to reduce earthquake risk by advancing the science and practice of earthquake engineering; improving understanding of the impact of earthquakes on the physical, social, economic, political, and cultural environment; and advocating comprehensive and realistic measures for reducing the harmful effects of earthquakes. [www.eeri.org](http://www.eeri.org)*