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August 7, 2020

Assembly Member Lorena Gonzales
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Capitol Office, Room 2114
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0080

Subject: **EERI Opposition to SB 758** Health and care facilities: disaster and seismic preparedness

Dear Assembly Member Gonzales:

On behalf of the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI), I am writing to express our **OPPOSITION** to California Senate Bill 758 - Health and care facilities: disaster and seismic preparedness, authored by Senator Anthony Portantino and now under consideration by your Committee.

The Hospital Seismic Safety Act of 1982, which created a statewide program based on legislation passed in 1972 and subsequent legislation, currently ensures that all acute care inpatient hospital facilities will be fully functioning following a damaging earthquake or else will be removed from service by January 1, 2030. Currently enacted legislation assures Californian's that there will be critical medical care available to them after a major earthquake, unlike what happened after the earthquakes in 1971, 1989 and 1994. Also, facility owners are required to submit by January 1, 2021 an attestation that hospital board members are aware of the deadline for compliance by 2030 and the responsibility they have to their communities. Standards enacted by the State Legislature in 1982 related to new construction and again in 1995 related to existing construction the California legislature set the 2030 deadline based on a thoughtful program that would give all communities in California the hospitals they will need when a major earthquake strikes their area.

The proposed language in this bill enables non-compliant hospitals to continue to forgo necessary upgrades that support community recovery. Remaining non-compliant facilities still have a decade before the 2030 deadline to seek funding support and upgrade to ensure compliance with the current law without jeopardizing essential acute care services that will be necessary in the wake of a damaging seismic event. While we recognize the potential financial strain on some smaller hospitals supporting rural communities or underserved populations, this legislation to extend seismic structural compliance an additional seven years beyond the current 2030 deadline is not an effective solution as it will put these California citizens at higher risk after an earthquake. Instead, this legislation should empower and support hospital owners to correct course to assure the seismic structural integrity of their facilities. Any suggestion that this is not necessary because of the numerous compliant hospitals that now meet the 2030 deadline and are now available, ignores the

unprecedented demand that a severe earthquake will create in metropolitan areas and leaves rural communities without their own hospital acute services.

As an internationally recognized authority on earthquake science and engineering for more than 70 years, EERI **OPPOSES** SB 758 as amended. We urge the Assembly Appropriations Committee to recommit to the goals of previous legislatures and, in the best interests of Californians, prevent any further advancement of SB 758 through the legislative process.

Thank you for considering EERI's informed position on this important seismic safety issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie A. Johnson".

Laurie A. Johnson
EERI President

About EERI:

EERI is an international, nonprofit technical society of experts dedicated to reducing earthquake risk. In this role, EERI advocates for comprehensive and realistic measures for reducing the destructive effects of earthquakes. EERI membership includes professionals in a wide range of seismic safety-related scientific and design disciplines, including but not limited to architects, planners, social scientists, seismologists, geologists, structural engineers, geotechnical engineers, public health professionals and public policy experts, many of whom are proud California residents and who have been instrumental in developing and implementing California seismic safety policy.