



# EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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July 1, 2020

The Honorable Rudy Salas, Jr.  
California State Assembly  
Capitol Office Room 4016  
P. O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0032

**Subject: Earthquake Engineering Research Institute's SUPPORT for AB 1923**

Dear Assembly Member Salas:

On behalf of the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI), I am writing to express our **support** for California Assembly Bill 1923 – Health and Safety Code: Residential Structures – Natural Gas Shutoff Devices.

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.

Current California law authorizes the Public Utilities Commission to require the installation of automatic shutoff valves or remote-controlled sectionalized block shutoff valves on specified gas pipelines if the Commission determines their installation is necessary for the protection of the public. Existing laws also authorize cities and counties to enact ordinances, in conformance with standards adopted by the State Architect, which require the installation of earthquake sensitive gas shutoff devices in buildings open to the public. However, the application of requirements to either residences or public spaces has been both irregular and incomplete.

EERI believes that it is time to reexamine California's needs for a defined, universally applied standard as an important and necessary step to improve the overall seismic resilience of communities and preserve housing against post-earthquake damage from fires caused by broken gas lines.

EERI would welcome participation in this working group with its diverse stakeholder representation, and expect that a consensus-based recommendation will emerge that identifies appropriate and practical directions for the California Building Code to enhance earthquake resilience. We believe that this is a vital investigation that will result in improved seismic safety for *all* California residents and we urge you to support this advancement of earthquake resilience.

Thank you for considering our position and please let us know how EERI can offer any further support.

Sincerely,

Laurie A. Johnson, President