



# EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING RESEARCH INSTITUTE

## Board of Directors

Laurie A. Johnson, *President*  
David A. Friedman, *Past-President*  
Barry H. Welliver, *Vice President*  
Lucy Arendt, *Secretary/Treasurer*

John G. Anderson  
Ross W. Boulanger  
Gregory G. Deierlein  
Erica Fischer

Tara C. Hutchinson  
Jorge Meneses  
Judith Mitrani-Reiser

**Executive Director**  
Heidi Tremayne

Tuesday, March 26, 2019

Assemblymember Adam C. Gray  
Chair, Assembly Governmental Organization  
1020 N Street, Room 360A  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## **Subject: Support for AB 429**

Dear Assemblymember Gray:

I am writing to you to express the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute's (EERI's) **support** of *California Assembly Bill 429 -- Seismically Vulnerable Buildings: Inventory*, introduced by Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian, which calls for a state-wide inventory of buildings with structural designs known to be most vulnerable to seismic events and to help establish a risk mitigation program for those buildings.

EERI is a national, nonprofit technical society of experts dedicated to reducing earthquake risk. In this role, it 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, structural engineers, geotechnical engineers, and public policy professionals. EERI has worked closely with Assemblyman Nazarian's Office in the preparation of this bill.

Existing law requires the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission to report annually to the Legislature on the filing of mitigation programs related to building construction standards as randomly reported from local jurisdictions. *California Assembly Bill 429* would require the Commission to identify funding sources and develop a bidding process for hiring a third-party contractor to develop a standardized statewide inventory of buildings with specific structural designs, as defined, that are most susceptible to severe damage or collapse from seismic events. The Bill also requires the Commission to maintain the standardized inventory and to report to the Legislature by specified dates the findings in the inventory.

Although several local jurisdictions already make selected inventories of some seismically vulnerable buildings, many others do not. The most pressing issue is that under current practices, there is no formal and/or universal standard to which local jurisdictions may refer in compiling a local inventory of buildings that require seismic mitigation actions. Local jurisdictions are not able to fully assess their local seismic risk to buildings if they cannot view the true scope of the hazard. Employing the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission to compile the defined building hazards through a standardized inventory will help all of the State's land use jurisdictions to better comprehend the true seismic vulnerability of their building stock, and to facilitate those jurisdictions in designing and implementing mitigation programs that meet their specific needs and circumstances.

Two remaining issues of concern to EERI are the clear definition of an "inventory", and the amount and source of funding necessary for the Commission to adequately produce a useable product. With respect to the inventory, EERI believes that the inventory should be as specific as possible as to type of structural deficiency,

specific location, and recovery function (business offices, retail store, apartment complex, hotel, etc.). Adequate funding is paramount and increasing the Commission's ability to seek additional funding sources beyond Federal grants and the State's General Fund could help to achieve the goals of the bill.

Californians have created the world's fifth largest economy, with a population of nearly 40 million people, and placed it all on the nation's most seismically active geology (outside of Alaska). Compiling a standardized inventory at the city level of its seismically vulnerable built environment is a most important step in helping to ensure the continuance of the State's vibrant economy and the well-being of its great and diverse population.

As an internationally recognized authority on seismic engineering and safety for more than 70 years, EERI would like to express its **support** of AB 429 and its hope that its concerns may be more clearly addressed. This is not the only step needed to mitigate seismic hazards and reduce seismic risks in California, but it is an essential first step to take.

We want to thank you for considering EERI's suggestions on this important legislation and for the opportunity to work closely with you on this critical seismic safety issue.

Sincerely,

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

Laurie A. Johnson  
President