



# EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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Senator Thad Cochran  
113 Dirksen SOB  
Washington DC 20510

July 24, 2017

Dear Senator Cochran,

The U.S. community of earthquake and tsunami engineers, scientists, planners and emergency manager, are strongly opposed to the President's proposed cuts to federal and state tsunami programs. These cuts will place millions of Americans and large amounts of property and infrastructure in 28 states at great risk. As the leading U.S. non-profit technical society dedicated to reducing risks from earthquake and tsunamis, the **Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) urges you to support continued funding for these life-saving tsunami programs.**

The cuts proposed in the President's budget would eliminate 80-90% of the funding these programs receive in an average year, which would create devastating long-term impacts to tsunami preparedness, response, and mitigation. They would undo years of productive work coordinated across all levels of government to reduce tsunami risk and would leave Americans less safe and less economically resilient.

Critical tsunami-related programs within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration slated for cuts in the President's proposed budget include:

- **Deep-ocean tsunami buoy system:** The termination of this \$12M program would sharply reduce the accuracy and timeliness of NOAA's tsunami Watches, Advisories, and Warnings. It would cut down on detection capabilities, which have been steadily built up at considerable expense since the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, which killed 230,000 people, and the 2011 Japan Tsunami, which killed 18,000.
- **Tsunami Warning Centers:** Eliminating one of two Tsunami Warning Centers (a \$3.5M cut) would increase the time and decrease the specificity of tsunami alerts. It would also eliminate the redundancy needed for real-time tsunami monitoring, because of the risk that one Tsunami Warning Center could go offline due to earthquake shaking.
- **State and local support:** Eliminating the full \$6M in state and local grants through the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program would leave local communities without the tools to respond effectively during a tsunami event. This program funds life-saving activities, including tsunami evacuation and response planning and tsunami hazard mapping fundamental for land-use, construction and infrastructure planning and development along the entire U.S. coastline.

The tsunami-focused programs listed above have clear benefits to all Americans. The costs of these programs are a mere fraction of the losses that can be generated by a single ocean-wide tsunami. For example, the 2011 Japan Tsunami cost nearly \$300B and resulted in the most severe nuclear disaster ever, making it the costliest natural disaster in modern history.

**Please do not allow our coastal population and infrastructure to become more vulnerable to tsunamis. We urge you to make sure that these programs are adequately funded in any budget passed by Congress.**

Sincerely,

David A. Friedman  
President