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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MAY 27 1976

May 26, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHARLIE LEPPERT  
FROM: Glenn *Glenn* Schleede  
SUBJECT: Earthquake Disaster Mitigation  
Act

S. 1174 passed the Senate on May 24. I assume that it will be taken up soon in the House. In case the question comes up, there is attached a fact sheet which:

- summarizes the bill;
- summarizes a position on the bill that is concurred in by OMB, NSF, and Interior.

Please let us know if you see motion. Thanks.

cc: Dick Allison  
Jim Mitchell  
Alan Kranowitz  
Hugh Loweth  
Don Crabill

FACT SHEET ON EARTHQUAKE DISASTER MITIGATION ACT  
S. 1174

Summary of Bill

The principal features of the bill are:

- The stated purpose is "to provide sound physical bases and operation systems for achieving major reductions in the earthquake hazards faced by the population living in regions of the United States of significant seismic risk. . ."
- The Director of the Geological Survey (GS), in consultation with the NSF, is to develop and carry out a program of research and implementation in the areas of tectonics, seismology, and geology. \$25 million is authorized each year for ten years beginning with FY 1976.
- The Director of the NSF, in consultation with the GS, is to develop and carry out a program of research and implementation in the areas of engineering, planning and social sciences. \$15 million is authorized for FY 1976 and \$25 million each of the nine years thereafter.
- An advisory committee is to be established by the Directors of the NSF and GS of people from the research community, Federal, State and users of earthquake data to review the program and advise GS and NSF.
- Dissemination of earthquake disaster mitigation information.

Administration Position

The Administration has taken the steps necessary to make an additional \$2.6 million available to increase earthquake monitoring and assessment in California beginning this summer.

Also, the President has directed his Science Adviser to develop recommendations in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey for a strengthened earthquake prediction and hazard mitigation program to be considered in the preparation of the 1978 Budget.

Since even a substantially expanded Federal program could be accomplished under existing authorities, the Administration recommends against enactment of S. 1174.



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 14, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR:

GLENN SCHLEEDE

FROM:

CHARLES LEPPERT, JR. *CLJ.*

SUBJECT:

Earthquake Disaster Mitigation  
Act, S. 1174

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S. 1174 has been referred to the Subcommittee on Science, Research, and Technology of the House Committee on Science and Technology.

Hearings have been scheduled for June 22, 23, and 24 on S. 1174 and H.R. 13845, a similar bill introduced in the House by Rep. Mosher.

cc: Tom Loeffler  
Pat Rowland



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



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Janet:  
do mean to please  
Schleede for me with the  
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Chas

WASHINGTON  
THE WHITE HOUSE

6371



Janet:  
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Char

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

5/7/72

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to?

Chas.

6/1 -  
House Com. on  
Science &  
Technology

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
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August 24, 1976

File

MEMORANDUM FOR: GUY STEVER CHARLIE  
JIM MITCHELL LEPPERT  
ART QUERN  
LYNN MAY  
FROM: GLENN SCHLEEDE  
SUBJECT: EARTHQUAKE MEMORANDUM

We must go forward with an information memo on earthquakes early on Wednesday, August 25.

Accordingly, may we have your corrections and comments on the attached draft by 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday. Please have them telephoned to Dennis Barnes at 456-2126.

Thanks for your help. Sorry for the short turn-around.



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

August 25, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: JIM CANNON  
SUBJECT: EARTHQUAKE PREDICTION  
AND PREPARATIONS

Jack Marsh has asked that we bring you up to date on recent activities with respect to earthquakes. Accordingly, this memorandum summarizes:

- . Increased public and Congressional concerns.
- . Pending legislation
- . Executive branch actions and activities
- . Next steps

Increased Concerns

Over the past few months, the public and the Congress have become increasingly concerned about earthquakes because:

- . Information released last December by the U.S. Geological Survey indicated that significant movement had occurred over the past 15 years along a 100 mile portion of the San Andreas Fault north of Los Angeles (the "Palmdale Uplift").
- . New public claims have emanated from the scientific community that we are on the verge of being able to predict earthquakes.
- . In May 1976, a California Institute of Technology professor reported that a major earthquake in the Los Angeles area was possible within a year.
- . During the past year, major destructive earthquakes have occurred in China, Guatemala, Italy and the Philippines -- seen by some as a potential worldwide earthquake pattern.

Congressional Action

The Congress has acted on earthquake legislation -- pushed primarily by members of the California delegation. Specifically:



- . In May 1976, the Senate passed a bill sponsored by Senator Cranston (S. 1174) which would (a) direct the President to establish a "coordinated earthquake hazard reduction program" to reduce disruption and loss of life and property, and (b) authorize \$150 million over three years, mostly for increased research by NSF and the Geological Survey.
- . On August 10, 1976, the House Science and Technology Committee ordered reported an amended version of S. 1174 which:
  - Establishes a new Office of Earthquake Hazards Reduction --to be located in the Executive Office of the President until a "home" is found for it by the President in some existing agency.
  - Establishes two new statutory earthquake advisory committees.
  - Calls for launching a "National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program," consisting of (a) expanded research on prediction, damage reduction and related economic and social issues, and (b) planning and implementing of all aspects of a comprehensive earthquake program.
  - Requires the President to specify the responsibilities of some 12 agencies that have earthquake related activities, and conduct an annual "unified" review of the overall program.
  - Authorizes \$92 million over three years.

Administration witnesses have testified against the bills in both the House and Senate on grounds that sufficient authority already exists to carry out Federal responsibilities with respect to earthquakes.

Our current assessment is that (a) both bills are undesirable--particularly the House bill which calls for a major new program and creates three new organizations prior to the completion of any satisfactory delineation of the problem to be addressed, (b) the House bill may well be on your desk before the end of the session unless some extraordinary steps are taken to slow it down, (c) a veto of the bill will be difficult to justify publicly.

#### Earthquake Related Actions Taken by the Executive Branch

During the past 9 months, the following actions have been taken:

- . Your 1977 Budget eliminated any funding for civil defense activities relating to natural hazards. Instead such

activities were limited to nuclear war preparations.

- . In April, you approved reprogramming of \$2.6 million for monitoring the uplift near Los Angeles. These funds are in addition to about \$20 million already in your Budget for NSF and Geological Survey earthquake research and prediction.
- . You directed Dr. Stever to review current Federal earthquake research and prediction program and provide information needed to consider increased earthquake research funding in your 1978 Budget. An interagency group and an outside advisory group established by Dr. Stever will soon recommend options for increasing earthquake R&D in 1978 by \$19 million to \$66 million above the current \$20 million level.
- . The Federal Disaster Assistance Administration (FDAA) of HUD delegated to the Geological Survey responsibility under the Federal Disaster Relief Act of 1974 for:
  - preparing to issue earthquake warnings.
  - providing assistance to state and local governments to issue warnings to the public. (No funds available for this.)
- . The FDAA retains responsibility for:
  - providing assistance to states for earthquake disaster preparation planning.
  - providing post-disaster assistance in the form of low-interest loans.

#### Next Steps

Thus far, our review of earthquake matters has indicated that:

- . The ability to predict earthquakes accurately -- in terms of date, location and intensity -- is not as near at hand as some had thought.
- . Despite this, we are not in a very good position to demonstrate that the Administration has taken all the actions that could reasonably be expected with respect to earthquakes. In fact, responsibilities are fragmented and



no comprehensive review has been undertaken to (a) identify and define the problems to be addressed, and (b) assign responsibilities. (This situation helps explain our inability to head off the legislation now moving in the Congress.)


- . No one has really thought through what the economic, social and legal problems would be if an when the capability exists to predict earthquakes some days or weeks in advance.
- . We are relying heavily on State and local Governments and the private sector to prepare for earthquakes, but:
  - those governments are not well prepared to carry out their responsibilities, and
  - recent events appear headed in the direction of forcing a greater Federal role and responsibility.

We have assumed that Federal responsibility is limited largely to R&D, planning assistance, warnings and post disaster loans; and that the state and local governments and private sector are responsible for post-prediction activities including warnings to the public, planning, zoning, building standards, insurance and dealing with virtually all economic, social and legal problems.

In view of our findings thus far, I have established an Ad Hoc Domestic Council group -- with participation from appropriate agencies -- to assess in more detail the current Federal authority and programs relating to earthquakes, identify problems requiring attention, and recommend necessary actions for your consideration.

Both OMB and Dr. Stever have concurred in this action and will participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Group.

I will keep you informed of progress.



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