





City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Office of Gerrie Schipske, R.N.P., J.D.
Councilwoman, Fifth District
Memorandum

R-13

Date: April 2, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske, Fifth District 
Councilmember James Johnson, Seventh District 

Subject: **AGENDA ITEM:** Request for Resolution in Support of Senate Bill 135 To
Create a Statewide Earthquake Early Warning System in California

Discussion:

March 10 was the 80th Anniversary of the Long Beach earthquake. Since then we have experienced numerous earthquakes in California such as Loma Prieta, Northridge, Whittier Narrows, and Sylmar. And as we know that another major earthquake in California is not a matter of if, but when.

We cannot prevent an earthquake, but we should do more to prepare ourselves. Earthquake early warning systems are in place, or in the works, in a number of earthquake prone nations including Japan, Taiwan, Mexico, Turkey, Italy, China and Romania. They not only save lives, they help mitigate damage.

Japan's earthquake early warning system provided the public with critical advanced warning of the 9.0 magnitude earthquake in March 2011. Earthquake warnings were automatically broadcast on television and radio, and 52 million people received the warning on their smartphones. The warnings allowed people to take cover, assist loved ones, pull to the side of the road or exit a building. A professor at the University of Sendai received a text message of the warning and was able to warn his students to duck for cover before the shaking began and the light fixtures fell from the ceiling.

In California, the California Institute of Technology, UC Berkeley, US Geological Survey, California Geological Survey and others operate a demonstration earthquake early warning system called the California Integrated Seismic Network.

Senate Bill 135 would build upon that progress and calls for a fully developed statewide system that would detect seismic activity, determine the progression and alert people in advance of an approaching earthquake to save lives and mitigate damage. It could provide critical seconds and up to 60 seconds to assist trains, power down infrastructure, and turn off industrial machines. Such a system would not only alert the public via television, radio and smartphones, it would speed the response of police and fire personnel by quickly identifying areas hardest hit by the quake.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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Early Warning System in California

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SB 135 would require the development of a comprehensive statewide earthquake early warning system in California. Senator Alex Padilla has requested that the City of Long Beach approve a resolution in support of SB 135 that would create an earthquake early warning system in California.

Fiscal Impact:

None

Recommendation:

It is moved that the City Council refer this matter to the State Legislative Committee for consideration of support of Senator Alex Padilla's bill – SB 135 – that would create an earthquake early warning system in California.