

WSSPC Annual Conference 1998

September 15-18, 1998
Pasadena, California

ANNUAL CONFERENCE POLICY SESSIONS

To further the mission of WSSPC, we have structured the conference sessions around the development of seismic policy. What is seismic policy? First perhaps we need to define "policy" or "government policy." The dictionary defines it as a principle, plan, or course of action as pursued by government. Following the dictionary definition using the word "principle," government policy could be defined as the philosophical basis for laws and regulations adopted by government. Seismic policy would then be such government policy that relates to earthquake hazards and mitigation. Each policy session will have brief presentations by the speakers and extensive time for participants to discuss and attempt to develop policy alternatives that address these issues.

CONFERENCE POLICY SESSION PAPERS

In an effort to add value to the conference, WSSPC will be issuing a *Policy Session Papers* volume before the event. The papers from the session speakers will be compiled and distributed to all attendees (before the conference). This volume will serve to prepare participants and will be an excellent addition to your library.

FIELD EXCURSION

WSSPC will be hosting a visit to interesting seismic sites in the Los Angeles area. The tour will take conference attendees to geologically interesting sites. Lunch will be provided during the field excursion. Space is limited and will be assigned on a first-come first-served basis.

PROGRAM

Tuesday, September 15

12:00pm Conference Registration Begins

1:30pm Conference Opening

Policy Session #1: Earthquake Hazard Insurance: Review and Recommendations

Moderator William Petak, Institute of Safety and Systems Management

Speaker Greg Butler, California Earthquake Authority

Jim Davis, CA Division of Mines & Geology, Dept. of Conservation

Robert Downer, Farmers Insurance

Session Description:

- What are the principal issues facing earthquake insurance?
- What has been your experience with the issue of earthquake insurance from a public policy perspective?
- What are your professional and institutional plans for the future regarding earthquake insurance?
- Suggest policy options to address these issues.

Session Goal: When discussing hazard insurance policy, is the primary goal to reduce the financial losses for individuals in our society, to reduce the role for government to assist those without insurance, or to encourage mitigation efforts that reduce risk to life and property?

If earthquake insurance is priced according to the risk, as determined by scientific experts, many people will not buy it because the price will be too high for the individual's *perceived* risk and will increase one's exposure to this hazard. Ironically, by developing a policy that allows all individuals to obtain hazard insurance at a low-cost, one may do more harm than good, because those who are insured would have less of an incentive to mitigate their structures. However, developing policies for hazard insurance that encourage mitigation can achieve all three of the above mentioned goals.

Therefore we ask the question: what are the essential elements of a hazard insurance policy that would increase mitigation efforts against natural hazards? In your answer, please address whether hazard insurance policy should be addressed at the national level or on a state level, whether these policies should be all-hazard or hazard specific, whether this insurance should be offered by the public or private sector and whether the coverage should be mandatory or optional.

5:30pm Evening Meet and Greet and Exhibitor Fair

Wednesday, September 16

7:00am Breakfast

8:00am Keynote Address

9:00am **Policy Session #2: National Risk Assessment**

Moderator Janiele Maffei, Degenkolb Engineers

Speakers Ron Eguchi, EQE International, Inc

Laurie Johnson, Risk Management Solutions

Stuart Nishenko, Federal Emergency Management Agency

Jeannie Perkins, Association of Bay Area Governments

Respondent Representative, State of Alaska

Session Description:

- What are the principal issues facing the development of the National Risk Assessment?
- What do you see are the public policy implications of the National Risk Assessment?
- Suggest policy options to optimize the usefulness of the National Risk Assessment.

Session Goal: The federal government is currently undertaking a monumental task of developing a national earthquake risk assessment. This project will provide invaluable information to a multitude of organizations and individuals regarding the threats facing the United States due to seismic hazards. However, the priorities and assumptions used in this assessment will have a significant impact in the outcomes of the study. This session should focus on policies regarding the implementation of the National Risk Assessment and

other regional risk assessments, including its use in decision making, as well as preparedness and mitigation activities.

Background

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently in the process of preparing an Annualized Earthquake Loss Estimate. This annualized estimate is being done in partnership with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and will portray expected annual losses due to earthquakes for each county in the continental United States.

In order to develop a methodology that incorporates the best and newest technologies and that meets the needs of the states, a process must be put into place that allows input and comment from all parties. By understanding the potential risk and loss, we can better determine priorities for other related concerns such as hazard insurance policy, building code development, and critical facility and infrastructure preparedness.

12:00pm Buffet Lunch and Exhibitor Fair

1:30pm Earthquake Program Development and Information Sharing

2:30pm **Policy Session #3: Earthquake Engineering and Construction Standards**

Moderator Paul Jennings, CA Institute of Civil Engineering

Speakers Marjorie Greene, Earthquake Engineering Research Institute

Mike Mahoney, Federal Emergency Management Agency

Fred Turner, CA Seismic Safety Commission

Respondent Charles Thiel, Engineer

Session Description:

- What are the principal issues facing earthquake engineering and construction standards?
- What has been your experience with the issue of earthquake engineering and construction standards from a public policy perspective?
- Suggest policy options to address these issues

Session Goal: Significant amounts of time and effort have been spent developing superior tools for retrofitting and new construction standards for seismic hazards. In addition to presenting these model programs, the panelist should focus on how these concepts can be implemented and what steps can be made in the public policy arena to see these succeed.

5:30pm Evening Social and Poster Session

Thursday, September 17

7:00am Breakfast

8:00am **Policy Session #4: Disaster Resistant Communities**

Moderator TBA

Speakers Stephen Baruch, Disaster Recovery Business Alliance

Renee Domingo, Oakland – Project Impact

James Mullen, Seattle – Project Impact

James Russell, Institute for Business & Home Safety
Respondent Richard Andrews, California Office of Emergency Services

Session Description:

- What are the principal issues facing the development of Disaster Resistant Communities?
- What has been your experience with the issue of development of Disaster Resistant Communities from a public policy perspective?
- Suggest policy options to address these issues

Session Goal: Tremendous success has been achieved in cultivating a new mind-set that includes disaster planning and mitigation in the development of many cities throughout the nation. However, this effort is still in its embryonic stage and needs significant development. What methods and policies can be implemented that will encourage the development and success of this new planning system?

11:30am Field Excursion

6:00pm Conference Banquet and WSSPC Awards in Excellence Ceremony

Friday, September 18

7:00am Breakfast

8:00am WSSPC Committee Meetings

9:00am WSSPC Business Meeting

10:00am **Policy Session #5: Preparing for Catastrophe: Utilities and Lifelines**

Moderator TBA

Speakers Jack Bernhardsen, WSCC

Woody Savage, PG&E

Ron Toznazzini, City of LA, Department of Water & Power

Representative, Rural Power Provider

Respondent TBA

Session Description:

- What are the principal issues facing preparing utilities and lifelines?
- What has been your experience with the issue of preparing utilities and lifelines from a public policy perspective
- Suggest policy options to address these issues

Session Goal: Utilities (such as: electricity, gas, telephone) are the lifeblood of every community. However, in the event of a major earthquake, will our utilities be in operation, keeping our communities functional at this critical time? This session is designed to begin the dialogue toward developing policy options for mitigating utilities against seismic hazards.

Using electrical utilities as the case study, what are the issues that face local communities (both rural and urban), individual states, and/or the entire western region? How should we address these issues? Does the responsibility for developing these policies belong to private companies, public utility

commissions, local, state or federal government, or some combination of these groups?

12:30 p.m. Conference Adjourns