

**WESTERN STATES SEISMIC POLICY COUNCIL  
POLICY RECOMMENDATION 07-6**

**Post-Earthquake Information Management System**

**Policy Recommendation 07-6**

WSSPC supports the development of a national Post-Earthquake Information Management System. The Management System would provide permanent archiving of essential data related to natural and socio-economic earthquake effects and the performance of the built environment from earthquakes within the United States, and could be combined with similar systems to assemble and archive data from other natural hazards events.

**Background**

Future improvements in the ability to engineer and construct buildings and other structures and infrastructure systems that can perform as needed in strong earthquakes depends on knowing about the performance resulting from current and past design and construction practices. No mechanisms are in place to systematically collect and archive these performance data for future use. Technical clearinghouses provide a means to assemble damage data reports that provide decision support for emergency management operations immediately following a significant event; however, much of that data is incompletely documented and becomes essentially lost soon thereafter. Data collected through post-earthquake technical clearinghouses (see WSSPC Policy Recommendation 07-3) and activities such as those sponsored by the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) can help us to be better prepared for future earthquakes – if the data are adequately documented, securely archived, and identified in a manner to make them available for use decades into the future.

The Management System data archive would contain technical information collected by post-earthquake clearinghouses as well as other information related to the particular event. The Post-Earthquake Information Management System would be consistent with the recommendations in National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) Plan to Coordinate Post-Earthquake Investigations (USGS Circular 1242):

“It is critical to develop strategies for the formal and systematic archiving of data collected during post-earthquake investigations. These data, which focus on the natural, built, and socioeconomic

environments, address a wide variety of phenomena. The data are voluminous and are acquired in many forms (for example, digital recordings, digital images, clipboard survey sheets, photographs, and narratives). If not organized and archived soon after an earthquake event, these data are often lost. No mechanism currently exists either to archive these data or to make them readily accessible to the research community. Because of this failure to adequately document, preserve, and access data, an enormous volume of highly relevant data has been effectively lost.”

## **Facilitation and Communication**

Adequate funding is necessary to establish this data collection guidance, and WSSPC supports use of federal funding, through NEHRP and/or the Stafford Act to support these activities for significant events. Earthquake clearinghouses may be established through specific mission assignments under the Stafford Act or through individual state authorizations.

WSSPC supports the development of a pilot or demonstration Post-Earthquake Information Management System project as soon as possible. This pilot could use data previously collected from a recent disaster, and would serve as a model to facilitate the implementation of a more general Management System following the next earthquake disaster.

WSSPC members are encouraged to develop public and private partnerships and Memoranda of Understanding with owners and regulators for the purpose of assuring that earthquake performance and damage information would be collected and made available for future use. These partnerships would identify critical data gaps and work to develop data collection strategies to fill those gaps in the aftermath of a significant event. These memoranda will need to address such issues as the need for inventory information, restrictions on facility access, security of confidential or sensitive data, etc.

WSSPC encourages its members to support operation of a standardized national Post-Earthquake Information Management System. Members are encouraged to coordinate their data post-earthquake collection and clearing house activities with the national Management System, and provide collected data and information to the post-earthquake data archive that is a component of the Management System. A key element in the Management System is standards for the specification of the types and formats of information necessary to be collected to ensure a thorough and accurate documentation of performance of the built environment during the earthquake.

## **Assessment**

Measures of the success of this policy will be (1) the annual communication of WSSPC members' support to NEHRP (and to other federal agencies as appropriate) for the establishment of a national Post-Earthquake Information Management System, (2) written support for the establishment of a pilot or demonstration Post-Earthquake Information Management System as developed by the American Lifelines Alliance or some other entity, and (3) preparation of an annual summary of WSSPC members' state-level progress in establishing in their jurisdictions one or more local or regional partnerships and agreements for the purpose of assuring the collection of post-earthquake performance and damage information for long-term use. This assessment procedure assumes that the success of the policy may take many years to accomplish.

## **History**

Policy Recommendation 07-6 was first proposed for adoption by the WSSPC membership at the Annual Business Meeting October 3, 2007, where it was unanimously approved as amended.