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Advisory Committee on Earthquake Hazard Reduction
c/o John R. Hayes, Jr.
United States Department of Commerce
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for this opportunity to bring to your attention our concerns about the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP). I am aware that earthquakes have occurred near Kentucky and I support the development of mitigation practices that reduce harm to people and property in the event of an earthquake. However, Kentucky is facing many serious problems because of the extremely high hazard estimate and design criteria in the *NEHRP Recommended Seismic Provisions for New Buildings and other Structures* and the USGS National Seismic Hazard maps that are a basis for the NEHRP design maps. The very high hazard estimate for parts of Kentucky in the National Seismic Hazard map (2% probability of exceedance in 50 years) that is mandated in federal guidelines places Kentucky higher in seismic hazard than the most seismically active areas in California. This is an unreasonable outcome that must be challenged.

In the early 2000s, high seismic hazard was cited as the reason Paducah lost a major contract for new generation centrifuges at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant. This was a major blow to the economy of western Kentucky. Kentucky is looking to all sources of electrical power for its future. Paducah has a trained workforce and a 60-year history in the nuclear industry. The extreme high hazard maps and design criteria are a serious barrier to the development of new industries despite deterministic estimates at the PGDP and Olmstead Lock and Dam that show only a moderate seismic hazard. It is not only the future of energy development for Kentucky but economic development in general that is at stake.

Because the stakes are so high in terms of future economic development for Kentucky, I request that NEHRP look into the reasons the Paducah area has such an extreme hazard estimate and consider revising the methodologies accordingly.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely yours,


Signed by Leonard K Peters

Leonard K Peters
Secretary Cabinet