

Revised for the 2010 Report

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1. Introduction

The National Earthquake Hazard Reduction Program (NEHRP), first authorized in 1977, is embodied in Public Law 108–360. It has grown to embrace an overarching Vision of “*A Nation that is earthquake-resilient in public safety, economic strength, and National Security,*” and Mission “*To develop, disseminate, and promote knowledge, tools, and practices for earthquake risk reduction – through coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency partnerships among the NEHRP Agencies and their stakeholders – that improve the Nation’s earthquake resilience in public safety, economic strength and national security.*”

The Advisory Committee for Earthquake Hazard Reduction (ACEHR) was added during the 2004 Reauthorization and charged to oversee the Program in four specific areas—new trends and developments, effectiveness, needed revisions, and management. By statute, the ACEHR was formed of non-federal employees representing research and academic institutions, industry standards development organizations, state and local government, and financial communities across all related scientific, architectural, and engineering disciplines.

ACEHR was directed to report within 1 year of formation, at least once every 2 years thereafter, and with due consideration given to the recommendations of the USGS Scientific Earthquake Studies Advisory Committee (SESAC). The ACEHR first met in May 2007 and has since filed reports in May 2008 and May 2009. Since the last report, ACEHR met face to face for two day sessions in November 2009 and March 2010. The committee also held to conference call meetings to complete report drafting in January and April 2010. Summaries of all meetings, all Reports and Presentations made to the committee are available at www.NEHRP.gov.

Over the past year since the last report, the committee requested and received briefings from the NEHRP Office and the four NEHRP Agencies at each face to face meetings. The briefing and subsequent discussion were detailed, complete, and informative. The committee appreciates the attention to detail shown by all and their consideration of the recommendations that have been made. At the November meeting, the committee also received a briefing from the White House Office of Resilience and the Department of Homeland Security Critical Infrastructure Protection Program. Robert Reed, the Special Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Senior Director for Resilience Policy discussed the Administrations’ current Resiliency Policies that are under development and welcomed continuing dialogue with the NEHRP. The Committee also received and reviewed the NEHRP annual report for 2009. The meeting summaries adequately capture the information provided to the Committee and the discussions that resulted in this first ACEHR report. The committee has not had the benefit of the recently commissioned NRC study that now under way. That study may point to additional new directions.

This report is a brief synthesis of the Committee's observations, conclusions, and recommendations related to the current status of NEHRP. It does not attempt to repeat information received by ACEHR on NEHRP activities to date. Those topics are adequately addressed in NEHRP's annual reports and strategic plans. It also does not attempt to outline the process used to develop the recommendations, as that is well noted in the meeting summaries. The committee represents a uniquely qualified cross section of the earthquake profession and their personal knowledge, experience and vision combined with the information presented forms the basis for this report.

The report is organized around the task areas assigned to ACEHR by its authorizing legislation. Section 2, Program Effectiveness and Needs, is organized by NEHRP agency and focuses on past and current accomplishments, future plans, and modifications needed to address the goals of the 2008–2012 NEHRP Strategic Plan. Two or three prioritized recommendations are included that relate to augmenting each agency's activities beyond their current efforts. Section 3, Management, Coordination, and Implementation of NEHRP, includes complimentary assessments of the NEHRP office within NIST, the effectiveness of the Program Coordination Working Group (PCWG), and the intrinsic value of the ICC, which is composed of the Directors of NEHRP agencies and the Directors of the White House OMB and OSTP. The Appendix, Trends and Developments in Science and Engineering, presents ACEHR's observations relating to six disciplines that are highly relevant to NEHRP. These observations provide the NEHRP agencies with an overview of the recent achievements that have been made and the issues and challenges facing the industry, with suggestions on where future strategic priorities should be focused.