

National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program

... a research and implementation partnership

Responses to 2015 ACEHR Recommendations Related to Interagency Coordinating Committee and Secretariat

Advisory Committee on Earthquake Hazards Reduction Meeting

3-4 March 2016

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FEMA

NIST
National Institute of
Standards and Technology



USGS
science for a changing world

national **earthquake** hazards reduction program

Critical Observation 1

ACEHR believes Congressional reauthorization of the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act is essential for the long-term viability of NEHRP. Such legislation should address sufficient funding levels for NEHRP to maintain its foundational emphasis on earthquake hazards and seismic design for the built environment, and provide an expanded emphasis on critical infrastructure and lifeline systems, and the social and economic dimensions of community seismic resilience.

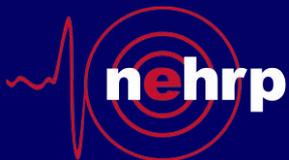
The NEHRP agencies would welcome the reinvigorated partnership with Congress that reauthorization would represent, but decisions on reauthorization rest with Congress, not with NEHRP. While budget authorizations expired at the end of FY 2009, the NEHRP agencies have continued to support the program under the provisions of PL 108-360.



Critical Observation 2

ACEHR believes a fundamental assessment of the nation's earthquake risk reduction progress to date is essential for guiding future direction and funding levels for improving national earthquake resilience. This assessment should address the extent to which the federal government, states, localities, tribes, and the private sector are taking steps to address the seismic vulnerability of buildings, critical infrastructure and lifeline systems. The assessment should be performed either prior to or as part of a new NEHRP authorization.

The NEHRP agencies value this observation and see it as a very worthwhile one. However, the agencies are not presently resourced adequately for performing this assessment, without redirecting funding that is presently being expended for other efforts (and thereby reducing the activities in support of those efforts).



ICC Recommendation 1

ACEHR calls upon the NIST Director, as Chair of the ICC, to revitalize the ICC as a mechanism for advancing NEHRP within the respective agencies. Doing so will foster renewed consideration by the leadership of the ICC about the future of NEHRP and how their agencies can assist in moving the Program ahead, along with stronger articulation of how NEHRP activities relate to other priorities and agendas within the respective agencies.

NIST leadership values and agrees with this recommendation. NIST is in the process of working with its NEHRP partner agencies to schedule an ICC meeting. NIST will let the ACEHR members know when this meeting is scheduled.



ICC Recommendation 2

ACEHR recommends the NIST Director, as Chair of the ICC, conduct a review of the status of core operational elements authorized and funded under NEHRP with attention to those elements that have been dropped or cut back, and those that have been expanded or added.

Our response is in two parts:

- Note that authorized funding for NEHRP expired at the end of FY 2009. The only NEHRP agency that receives specified appropriations for NEHRP today is USGS. The other NEHRP agencies allocate funding from their general appropriations to support their involvement in NEHRP.*
- In consideration of the background information that ACEHR provided with this recommendation, we will discuss the specific background topics at the ICC meeting that is being scheduled. Agency autonomy is a major consideration.*



NEHRP Secretariat Recommendation

ACEHR recommends the NEHRP Secretariat work with the four NEHRP agencies to promote the development of consensus standards for a market-based, private-sector-led rating system for the seismic performance of buildings.

The NEHRP agencies encourage the development and application of transparent, scientifically sound, and accurate national consensus building rating systems, in this case for the earthquake hazard, but also for other natural and man-made hazards. Such systems should be compatible with national consensus building codes and standards, recognizing that rating systems are not the same as codes and standards.

The NEHRP agencies agree that, applied appropriately, such building rating systems can improve community resilience.

The NEHRP agencies do not have a regulatory role and cannot endorse a specific private sector building rating system.

