

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 25, 2021

The Honorable Rob Fairweather  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
Executive Office of the President  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Acting Director Fairweather:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Budget for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), we strongly urge you to include robust funding for the development, operation and maintenance of the Earthquake Early Warning system (EEW) for the U.S. West Coast, also known as ShakeAlert. With increased federal investment for ShakeAlert, the United States has been able to successfully implement ShakeAlert along the West Coast of the United States, a system that protects lives and enhances infrastructure resilience. Congress has been steadfast in its support for the system, providing the highest annual funding amount to date in FY21. We ask that you continue the bipartisan support for this critical technology.

The USGS has been working with the California Institute of Technology; the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Washington; the University of Oregon; the University of Nevada, Reno; Central Washington University, and state emergency services agencies to deploy the system. In 2019, ShakeAlert reached another significant milestone: starting in California, it implemented Phase 3 allowing for two independent means to alert the public of an earthquake, through the Wireless Emergency Alerts system and from a smartphone app that may be downloaded. In 2020, Google released an earthquake alert feature powered by ShakeAlert for Android phones. ShakeAlert public alerts will be coming to the Pacific Northwest in 2021. More than half of the planned sensors have been installed along the West Coast, and nearly all planned sensors have been installed near major metropolitan areas, like Los Angeles and the Bay Area.

With concern regarding the heightened risk of a major earthquake resulting from increased seismic activity near the San Andreas Fault, coupled with the prospect of a magnitude 9.0 earthquake along the Pacific Northwest coast, there is public demand for EEW to be fully operational. When major earthquake events occur—and we know it is “when” and not “if”—they have the potential to be one of the costliest and deadliest disasters the United States has ever faced. Given the economic and health strains of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is more critical than ever that we limit the potential damage of compounding crises.

Even with just a few seconds of warning, steps can be taken to prevent casualties and mitigate destruction, including slowing or stopping trains and cars; turning off supplies of oil, natural gas, and chemicals; securing large manufacturing equipment; stopping elevators and opening doors; and securing sensitive computer data.

The effectiveness of EEW largely depends on modern cyber infrastructure, and the number and placement of ground motion sensors to ensure there is adequate coverage wherever an earthquake may hit—and this requires additional resources. Congress recognizes the value of this system and continues to demonstrate its commitment by providing additional resources for ShakeAlert.

To follow through on the funding made by the federal government, as well as growing commitment from states and the private sector, it is critical that this program be funded at \$28.6 million annually so the West Coast will be prepared for the next catastrophic earthquake. This technology will save lives and reduce the economic impact of an earthquake; it simply needs to be properly funded.

Thank you for considering our request.  
Sincerely,



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**Adam B. Schiff**  
Member of Congress



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**Derek Kilmer**  
Member of Congress



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**Peter DeFazio**  
Member of Congress

**Nanette Diaz Barragán**  
Member of Congress

**Judy Chu**  
Member of Congress

**Rick Larsen**  
Member of Congress

**Cliff Bentz**  
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**Ami Bera, M.D.**  
Member of Congress

**Anna G. Eshoo**  
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Member of Congress

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**Jared Huffman**  
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**Jerry McNerney**  
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**Salud Carbajal**  
Member of Congress

**Pramila Jayapal**  
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**Grace F. Napolitano**  
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**Kurt Schrader**  
Member of Congress

**Adam Smith**  
Member of Congress

**Mike Thompson**  
Member of Congress

**Kim Schrier, M.D.**  
Member of Congress

**Marilyn Strickland**  
Member of Congress

**Juan Vargas**  
Member of Congress

**Brad Sherman**  
Member of Congress

**Eric Swalwell**  
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Scott de la Vega  
Acting Secretary of the Interior

The Honorable David Applegate  
Acting Director, U.S. Geological Survey