**WESTERN STATES SEISMIC POLICY COUNCIL**

**POLICY RECOMMENDATION**

**Policy Recommendation**

WSSPC recommends the creation, implementation, and maintenance of Seismic Safety Councils and Commissions for all its member states, provinces, and territories.

WSSPC further recommends that all member states, provinces, or territories currently having Seismic Safety Councils and Commissions share their existing expertise, processes, best practices, and lessons learned to members looking to institute councils, commissions, and support existing earthquake programs.

**Executive Summary**

Current Seismic Safety Councils and Commissions support their state, province, or territory earthquake programs in all aspects of seismic research, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. They often fulfill this role by advocating for pre-disaster mitigation of earthquake and tsunami hazards, increasing education and public understanding of earthquake risk, influencing legislation to provide cost-effective recommendations to reduce lives lost and improve recovery in the case of a quake, and respond to and submit strategies to support these goals. WSSPC strongly encourages all partners to be proactive in not only supporting the seismic commissions and councils which currently exist, but to support the creation of new seismic commissions and councils.

**Background**

Comprehensively addressing seismic hazards, events, and impacts can’t be done by a single agency or entity acting alone. It requires coordinated partnerships. The construction of the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) reflects this concept as it has four key federal agencies involved. Those agencies are: U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Each agency has a unique mission of its own, but combining their capabilities and capacities allows for a more comprehensive program.

Within WSSPC: Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah have active seismic commissions and councils. Arizona has recently reconstituted its seismic safety council. The history and experiences of these multi-disciplinary entities has demonstrated measurably increased levels of coordination focused towards life safety and community resiliency. These partnerships have led to identifying and leveraging opportunities which would not have otherwise been possible due to “stove-piping” of information, resources, and efforts.

Current Seismic Safety Councils and Commissions are:

* Reviewing jurisdictional seismic hazards and generating risk analysis reports,
* Investigating and evaluating seismic events and their impacts,
* Providing recommendations for seismic policy, legislation, processes, and programs focused on earthquake preparedness, reducing loss of life, increasing safety, loss reduction, and event recovery,
* Supporting the implementation of seismic programs, and
* Providing platforms for both public inputs and outreach

This policy was suggested during an August 2019 WSSPC Geologist/Seismic Commissions and Councils teleconference. The policy recommendation supports WSSPC’s goals to:

* Promote regional cooperation and the interaction of the State Emergency Management, State Geological Surveys, and State Seismic Councils and Commissions in the formation of seismic policy
* Improve the overall awareness of earthquake hazards and methods to mitigate the associated risks, develop strategies to enhance earthquake preparedness, and support earthquake studies and earthquake preparedness activities that will reduce or eliminate deaths, injuries and property damage