

Date of Hearing: March 23, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Rhodesia Ransom, Chair

AB 2471 (Committee on Emergency Management) – As Introduced February 20, 2026

SUBJECT: Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission

SUMMARY: This bill would add representatives of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), Department of Insurance (CDI), and Strategic Growth Council to the Seismic Safety Commission, and reduce the number of members appointed by the Governor by one. The bill would additionally require the Commission, to make policy recommendations to the Legislature, as specified. Specifically, **this bill:**

1. Reduces Governor appointees subject to confirmation by the Senate from 10 to 9.
2. Requires members of the Safety Seismic Commission to now also include the following:
 - a. A representative of the State Fire Marshal
 - b. A representative of the Department of Insurance
 - c. A representative of the Strategic Growth Council
3. Requires the Safety Seismic Commission to, in addition to the existing statutorily required agencies, work with the OSFM, CDI, and Strategic Growth Council to identify key activities and responsibilities related to seismic safety and develop a schedule to provide periodic updates to the commission on their activities.
4. Requires at least nine members to constitute a quorum, an increase of 1 member.
5. Authorizes appointed members to represent investor-owned utilities.
6. Authorizes, until 2030, the Commission to make policy recommendations to the legislature to mitigate the following risks:
 - a. Fires following major earthquakes in urban areas including, but not limited to, alternative water suppression systems.
 - b. Disruptions to fuel, gas, electrical, water, transportation, communications, and other lifeline infrastructure systems due to major earthquakes.
7. Removes the requirement for Commission to provide their annual report, required until 2030, to the Senate Committee on Governmental Organization and instead requires the report to now be provided to the Senate Committee on Emergency Management, in addition to existing entities, as specified.
8. Requires the annual report to include policy recommendations, as specified.

EXISTING LAW:

1. Establishes within the Office of Emergency Services, the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission that consists of 15 members, 10 of whom shall be appointed by the

Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate, and includes representatives from professional fields, as specified. (Government Code Section 8589.71)

2. Requires that one member shall be a representative from the Office of Emergency Services, one member of the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission shall be a representative from the Division of the State Architect in the Department of General Services, and one member shall be a representative from the California Building Standards Commission. (Government Code Section 8589.71)
3. Requires the above representatives to annually update the commission on their seismic safety activities, as specified. (Government Code Section 8589.71)
4. Requires ten members that represent the fields of structural engineering, planning, fire protection, public utilities, insurance, social services, emergency services, and other local government areas that serve the public interest. (Government Code Section 8589.71).
5. Establishes that each member of the commission shall be appointed for a term of four years. (Government Code Section 8589.71)
6. Requires that at least eight members shall constitute a quorum. (Government Code Section 8589.72)
7. Authorizes the Safety Seismic Commission, until January 1, 2030, to coordinate with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Office of Emergency Services to do any of the following: (Government Code Section 8589.75)
 - a. Develop a list of all fire stations in California and each station's status in meeting the standards of the Essential Services Buildings Seismic Safety Act of 1986 to determine which stations are adequately designed and constructed to minimize fire hazards and to resist the forces generated by earthquakes, gravity, and winds.
 - b. Collect data on the implementation of earthquake early warning technology in all fire stations in California and their interest in implementing that technology.
 - c. Research other potential sources of funding for seismic mitigation activities.
8. Requires the Seismic Safety Commission to annually, until January 1, 2030, provide a report to the Assembly Committee on Emergency Management and the Senate Committee on Governmental Organization, describing the commission's actions and conclusions. (Government Code Section 8589.75)
9. After January 1, 2030, require the commission to: (Government Code Section 8589.75)
 - a. Report annually to the Governor and the Legislature on its findings, progress, and recommendations related to activities of the commission and the state toward higher levels of seismic safety and any other seismic safety issues.
 - b. Work with agencies, as specified, to identify key activities and responsibilities related to seismic safety and develop a schedule to provide periodic updates to the commission on their activities, which must be summarized in the above report.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This bill has not been analyzed by a fiscal committee.

COMMENTS:

Author Statement:

“This bill reaffirms California’s commitment to seismic safety by requiring representatives from the State Fire Marshal, Department of Insurance, and Strategic Growth Council to be part of the Seismic Safety Commission. Restructuring the Commission and requiring coordination between key entities responsible for fire safety, insurance risk, and statewide planning strengthens the technical capacity of the Commission.”

Equity Impact: Increasing expertise and representation on the Commission will contribute to producing more robust seismic policy recommendations that will ensure statewide standards and preparedness efforts better protect all Californians.

Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission (SSC)

The Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission (SSC) was established in 1975 by the Seismic Safety Act. The SSC provides a coordinated framework for establishing consistent earthquake policies, advises the Governor, the Legislature, local governments, and the public, and tracks the state’s progress toward improving seismic safety through annual publications. The SSC works with federal, state, and local agencies, as well as the private sector, on a variety of activities that support the State’s earthquake preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts. Currently, there are 15 commissioners who provide policy guidance, expertise, and perspectives from the private sector, academia, and local and state government.

Seismic Safety and Earthquake Hazards in California:

California’s experience with major earthquakes has driven more than a century of seismic safety reforms, most notably following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, the 1933 Long Beach earthquake, and the 1994 Northridge earthquake. According to seismologists and other experts, it is not seismic shaking, but rather the collapse or failure of structures, that kills the most people in an earthquake. These events revealed systemic weaknesses in structural design, land-use planning and emergency response capacity, prompting the Legislature to adopt landmark measures such as the Field Act of 1933 which set seismic safety standards for public and private schools, the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act of 1972 which prevents structures people will occupy to be developed on an active earthquake fault, and the Alfred E. Alquist Hospital Seismic Safety Act to ensure hospitals remained operational after major seismic events.

The United States Geological Survey estimates a 72% probability that at least one earthquake of Magnitude 6.7 or greater, capable of causing widespread damage, will strike the San Francisco Bay Area before 2044. For the Los Angeles region, the same model forecasts a 60-percent probability that an earthquake of Magnitude 6.7 or greater will occur before 2044.¹

Strong earthquakes of Magnitude 6 to 6.9 strike California, on average, once every two to three years. An earthquake of this size, such as the 1994 Northridge Earthquake (Magnitude 6.7) or the

¹ What is the probability that an earthquake will occur in the Los Angeles Area? In the San Francisco Bay area?
<https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-probability-earthquake-will-occur-los-angeles-area-san-francisco-bay-area>

1983 Coalinga Earthquake (Magnitude 6.7), is capable of causing significant damage if the epicenter is near a densely populated area. Major earthquakes (Magnitude 7 to 7.9) occur in California about once every 10 years. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) modeling for major earthquake scenarios in the Bay Area and Southern California, violent shaking in densely populated areas could result in over 50,000 displaced households and over 30,000 individuals requiring short-term shelter.²

California's seismic safety frameworks are carried out through a combination of engineering standards, hazard assessments, and interagency coordination. The California Building Standards Commission adapts statewide structure codes governing buildings and critical facilities, while the California Geological Survey produces fault-rupture, liquefaction, and seismic-hazard maps that serve to inform local development decisions. Statewide preparedness and public information efforts are primarily led by Cal OES, providing planning guidance and centralized earthquake-hazard resources. Historical policy developments are documented in the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission's publication on 100 Years of Seismic Safety, demonstrating what has shaped California's integrated approach to mitigation, response, and recovery.³

Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM)

The Office of the State Fire Marshal provides support through a wide variety of fire safety responsibilities including: regulating buildings in which people live, congregate, or are confined; by controlling substances and products which may, in and of themselves, or by their misuse, cause injuries, death and destruction by fire; by providing statewide direction for fire prevention within wildland areas; by regulating hazardous liquid pipelines; by developing and reviewing regulations and building standards; and by providing training and education in fire protection methods and responsibilities. This bill requires a representative from the OSFM be added to the SSC, which may increase the level in which fire safety responsibilities are considered in reports, conclusions, and policy recommendations submitted to the Legislature.

California Department of Insurance (CDI)

The Department of Insurance (CDI) is the consumer protection agency for the nation's largest insurance marketplace and safeguards all of the state's consumers by regulating the insurance industry. CDI provides expert technical knowledge and resources regarding seismic safety insurance as well as various natural disasters.

Although existing law requires the Seismic Safety Commission to include representatives from the field of insurance that serves the public interest, this bill would require a representative directly from the Department of Insurance. Including CDI may further support the SSC's seismic safety advisory role and technical knowledge of statewide insurance conditions on earthquake risk and formalize a channel for coordination with the state's insurance oversight. As CDI focuses on consumer protection laws, having a CDI representative may ensure policies recommended by the Commission reflect the current challenges California insurers and consumers face.

²FEMA Hazus Program, <https://www.fema.gov/flood-maps/products-tools/hazus>

³ 100 Years of Seismic Safety, Seismic Safety Commission https://www.ssc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/08/100_years_seismic_safety.pdf

Strategic Growth Council:

The Strategic Growth Council was established by SB 732 (Steinberg, Chapter 729, Statutes of 2008.). The Council is a cabinet level committee that is tasked with coordinating the activities of state agencies to, among other things, improve air and water quality, protect natural resources and agriculture lands, increase the availability of affordable housing, promote public health and equity, improve transportation, encourage greater infill and compact development, strengthen the economy, promote water conservation, revitalize community and urban centers, assist state and local entities in the planning of sustainable communities, and advance the priorities developed in Safeguarding California, the State's climate adaptation strategy. The Council is comprised of the Secretaries of agencies across California covering a wide breadth of topics, regulatory experience, and guidance. Requiring a member from the Council on the SSC may ensure actions, conclusions, and policy recommendations made by the Commission would be in concert with the Council's sustainability, equity, economic prosperity, and quality of life strategies.

Current SSC Membership:

Under current statute, 10 of the 15 members of the Seismic Safety Commission must be Gubernatorial appointments. Currently the Commission has representatives from the following areas: Local Government, the California Building Standards Commission, the California Division of State Architect, public utilities, emergency services, structural engineering, the State Assembly, Cal OES, and Fire Protection. Positions representing the fields of insurance, planning, and social services are currently vacant.

Double Referral: Should this bill be approved, it will be referred to the Assembly Committee on Insurance.

Related Legislation

AB 1770 (Committee on Emergency Management), Chapter 212, Statutes of 2024. Authorized the Seismic Safety Commission to coordinate with Cal Fire and Cal OES related to implementing and funding seismic mitigation activities and earthquake early warning technology.

AB 1831 (Seyarto, 2022). This bill would have required the Seismic Safety Commission to include a member that represents the field of developmental disability services. (Died in Assembly Governmental Organization Committee).

AB 100 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 20, Statutes of 2020. This bill moved and integrated the Seismic Safety Commission into Cal OES to streamline earthquake safety, mitigation, and response efforts.

AB 1731 (Committee on Housing and Community Development), Chapter 504, Statutes of 2003. Required the Seismic Safety Commission to serve on the State Historical Building Safety Board.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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