
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Senator Henry Stern

Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2471 **Hearing Date:** 6/16/2026
Author: Committee on Emergency Management
Version: 2/20/2026 Introduced
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Cassie Royce

SUBJECT: Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission

SUMMARY: Modifies the membership and coordination authority of the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission (Commission).

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) as the lead agency in the state that coordinates disaster response, emergency planning, emergency preparedness, disaster recovery, disaster mitigation, and homeland security activities.
- 2) Establishes the Commission as a separate unit within Cal OES and authorizes the Commission to recommend policies, hold meetings, hold hearings, and provide positions on proposed state and federal legislation.
- 3) Requires the Commission to comprise 15 members, 10 of whom shall be appointed by the Governor and subject to confirmation by the Senate.
- 4) Provides that one representative member of the Commission must each be from Cal OES, the Division of the State Architect in the Department of General Services, and the California Building Standards Commission.
- 5) Requires the representatives in 4) above to annually update the Commission on their seismic safety activities, as specified.
- 6) Requires 10 Commission members to 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.

- 7) Specifies that each member of the Commission shall be appointed for a four-year term.
- 8) Establishes that at least eight members constitute a quorum.
- 9) Authorizes the Commission to coordinate with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and Cal OES to do various activities, as specified, until January 1, 2030.
- 10) Requires the Commission, at a minimum, to 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.

This bill:

- 1) Increases the overall number of Commission members from 15 to 17 and reduces the number of members appointed by the Governor from 10 to 9.
- 2) Requires the Commission to include one representative member each from the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), Department of Insurance (CDI), and Strategic Growth Council (SGC).
- 3) Requires at least nine members to constitute a quorum, an increase of one member.
- 4) Authorizes one of the Governor's appointees to represent investor-owned utilities.
- 5) Requires the Commission to additionally work with the OSFM, CDI, and SGC as part of the Commission's existing duty to identify and report on key activities and responsibilities related to seismic safety.
- 6) Expands the existing authority for the Commission to coordinate with CAL FIRE and Cal OES on a variety of specified activities until January 1, 2030, to include making policy recommendations regarding fire risk mitigation and lifeline infrastructure system disruptions after a major earthquake.
- 7) Makes other minor technical and nonsubstantive changes.

Background

Author's statement. According to the author, "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."

The Commission. The Commission was established in 1975, with passage of the Seismic Safety Act to provide a coordinated framework for establishing consistent earthquake policies, advising the Governor, the Legislature, local governments, and the public, and tracking the state's progress toward higher levels of seismic safety. To support this broad mission, the Commission uses the expertise of its commissioners to review, evaluate, and translate scientific information and make recommendations to guide and influence earthquake safety policies.

The Commission 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. These activities are described below:

- a) Encourage and support research related to seismic safety;
- b) Recommend the addition, deletion, or changing of state agency guidelines or standards to reduce damage from earthquakes or increase seismic safety when new developments would promote earthquake hazard mitigation;
- c) Develop findings and recommendations on lessons learned that lead to reduced losses and rapid economic recovery, following a destructive earthquake;
- d) Conduct public hearings on seismic safety issues;
- e) Utilize existing knowledge and conduct studies, where necessary, to improve the performance of structures in California;
- f) Recommend earthquake safety programs, and,
- g) Support cost-effective partnerships that help reduce earthquake risks and speed economic recovery.

This bill aims to revise the composition of the Commission by, among other things, including representatives from the OSFM, CDI, and SGC, and expands the Commission's coordinating activities with CAL FIRE and Cal OES to include additional policy making actions related to risk from post-earthquake fires in urban areas and disruptions to certain critical lifeline infrastructure systems from a major earthquake.

Prior/Related Legislation

AB 1770 (Assembly Emergency Management Committee), Chapter 212, Statutes of 2024, authorizes the 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) of 2022 would have required the 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, moved and integrated the Commission into Cal OES to streamline earthquake safety, mitigation, and response efforts.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

SUPPORT:

San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association

OPPOSITION:

None on file

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: In support of the bill, the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association writes that, “AB 2471 helps ensure that the state’s seismic safety leadership remains responsive to today’s risks and better aligned with evolving emergency management needs by adding representatives from the State Fire Marshal, Department of Insurance, and the Strategic Growth Council....[and] expands the Commission’s ability to make policy recommendations....in partnership with CalOES and CalFIRE, on fire following earthquakes risks, alternative water suppression, and disruptions to lifeline infrastructure. This bill represents a thoughtful step forward in modernizing the state’s approach to seismic safety and preparedness.”