Seismic Safety Commission
Five-Year Work Plan

Introduction

This document outlines research and funding priorities, protocols, and procedures for the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission (SSC) program from 2027 to 2032. The program provides 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. The SSC draws on commissioners' expertise to review, evaluate, and translate scientific information and to make recommendations that guide and influence earthquake safety policies. The SSC works with federal, state, and local agencies, as well as the private sector, on a range of activities that support the state's earthquake preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts. These activities include (1) developing and reviewing seismic safety projects; (2) providing consistent policy direction; (3) proposing and reviewing earthquake-related legislation; (4) conducting public hearings on seismic safety issues; (5) using existing knowledge and conducting studies to improve the performance of structures in California; and (6) recommending earthquake safety programs and supporting cost-effective partnerships that help reduce earthquake risks and speed economic recovery.

Background

At the April 10, 2025, SSC meeting, Commissioners received an update on the current balance of the California Research and Assistance Fund (CRAF) account. The SSC asked staff to develop and present a proposed process for funding projects and research. At the July 17, 2025, meeting, the SSC approved the following option to fund priorities for future projects and to establish an annual decision-making process.

The SSC funds its research and seismic safety initiatives through three sources: the General Fund, the Insurance Fund, and the CRAF account. This diversified funding structure provides the SSC with dedicated resources to support research, technical investigations, and projects essential to understanding and mitigating California's earthquake risks.

Policy and Legislative Framework

Several critical legislative mandates exist for the SSC:

- **The Seismic Safety Commission Act of 1975 (Government Code Sections 8870 – 8870.95):** Officially established the SSC (originally named the Seismic Safety Commission) in response to lessons learned from damaging earthquakes such as the 1971 San Fernando earthquake. It outlines the commission's mandate to advise the Governor, Legislature, and local governments on earthquake risk reduction.

- **Assembly Bill 100 (2020)** restructured the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission by integrating it into the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to merge earthquake science with disaster management. The legislation reduced the SSC from 20 to 15 members and instituted an annual reporting mandate for major state departments to monitor California's earthquake readiness. Furthermore, this legislation mandated that nine specific state organizations must work with and provide their seismic updates to the SSC. The full list of statutory reporting organizations include (but is not limited to):
    - **Department of Conservation (California Geological Survey - CGS):** Tracks tectonic activity, faults, and mapping data.
    - **California Earthquake Authority (CEA):** Provides data on earthquake insurance policies, residential mitigation financing, and risk pools.
    - **Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI):** Monitored under its former name in the bill text, the *Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD)*, this department reports on hospital structural safety compliance.
    - **Department of Transportation (Caltrans):** Submits readiness statuses reports for highways, overpasses, and bridge structural retrofits.
    - **Department of Water Resources (Division of Safety of Dams):** Delivers critical inspection and safety infrastructure tracking for state dams.
    - **California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC):** Oversees and reports on the structural integrity of investor-owned power, gas, water, and telecommunications frameworks.
    - **California Energy Commission (CEC):** Officially named in the text as the *State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission*, it reports on power plant and statewide grid energy security.

- **Universities of California (UC System):** Coordinates the tracking of seismic research labs, university infrastructure, and academic geology data.
- **California State Universities (CSU System):** Tracks structural campus safety plans and updates for the state university system.

- **Assembly Bill 1770 (2025)** expanded the role of the Alfred E. Alquist Seismic Safety Commission, requesting that the SSC collect information on 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; collect data on the implementation of earthquake early warning technology; and research other potential sources of funding for seismic mitigation activities. It also established a mandatory reporting element, requiring the SSC to submit annual progress reports to the Legislature starting in 2026.

- Under **Business and Professions Code Sections 10149 and 10147**, the SSC is required to develop, adopt, publish, and rely on currently available data to update the Homeowner's Guide to Earthquake Safety for Residential Sales (HOG) and Commercial Property Owner's Guide to Earthquake Safety for Residential Sales (COG). **Government Code Section 8897.1** requires the transferor of any real property containing any older residential dwelling meet certain criteria, to deliver to the purchaser or transferee a copy of the HOG, and make the earthquake hazards disclosure as soon as practicable before the transfer of title. **Government Code Section 8875.6** requires the transferor of any unreinforced masonry building with wood-frame floors or roofs, built before January 1, 1975, to deliver to the purchaser a copy of the COG. Finally, **Civil Code Section 2079.8** states that delivering the HOG is deemed adequate to inform a buyer about geologic and seismic hazards that may affect real property and mitigating measures the buyer or seller might consider.

- **Assembly Bill 2471 (2026)** Signed into law in September 2026, this legislation additionally provides for the appointment of 3 members who are representatives of the State Fire Marshal, Department of Insurance, and Strategic Growth Council, and would reduce the number of members appointed by the Governor to 9 members, as specified. The bill would also support the SSC in coordinating with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Office of Emergency Services to

make policy recommendations to the Legislature, as specified. It further specifies that an annual report on critical infrastructure and policy recommendations regarding critical infrastructure and seismic safety.

Priorities for Funding Research Projects

To focus research efforts and resources, each year will have a theme for research solicitations. Based on the Commissioners' survey results, water systems, structures, and gas systems were the top requested themes. Second highest was power generation, followed by health care facilities and networks and transportation. The final optional theme was cyber safety and the internet; however, because the first year of the five-year work plan has been taken up by previous projects, the SSC will focus primarily on these four. Finally, one option is to add debris management to the list of research themes, based on a suggestion from one of the Commissioners.

Annual Themes

Year	Theme for Year
2027	Water systems, structures, and gas
2028	Power generation
2029	Health care facilities
2030	Transportation
2031	Cyber safety, infrastructure and telecommunications

The SSC is also continually interested in cross-cutting themes, whether emergent or long-standing research topics that warrant further study.

Cross-Cutting Themes Include:

- Polycrisis, compounding disasters and cascading hazards (Geohazards; Landslides; Tsunami; Ground Failure; Volcanoes);
- Human dimensions (social sciences);
- Improved safety for first responders;
- Adaptive reuse and built environment;
- Emergent technologies (artificial intelligence, autonomous vehicles, etc.); and
- Debris management.

Biannual Project Funding Cycle

Annually, at the October meeting, the SSC will review the estimated fund balance and spending projections and begin discussing funding priorities.

Annually, at the January meeting, the SSC will receive the final budget numbers and set funding priorities guided by the workplan—amounts and project categories—for the upcoming funding cycle. Specifically, the SSC will provide general direction for staff to develop Requests for Proposal (RFPs) for solicitation of projects. The SSC may assign an ad hoc committee to assist staff in reviewing the RFPs. The ad hoc committee may help staff with the scoring and selection process, advised by technical experts established through the expert consultation process, if necessary. By July, projects will be recommended to the SSC, along with the candidates' presentations, and the SSC will make the final selections at the October meeting.

Presentations for research ideas, program changes, and policy considerations will be allowed at any meeting of the year to inform the SSC in setting the funding priorities, but funding decisions will be made only at the April and October meetings, if applicable. High-level RFP details will be included in the commissioner's read-ahead materials for each meeting, at which the requestor presents a project proposal for the April and October meetings.

However, projects may be considered outside of the above timeline on an ad hoc basis, depending on need and relevance to recent events.

Assembly Bill 100 Reports

When the SSC moved to Cal OES, nine agencies were required to report directly to the SSC annually and develop a reporting schedule. Since 2021, the following agencies have reported:

Reporting Year	CA Department or Agency	Number of Report
2021	1. Health Care Access and Information Access 2. California Geological Survey	First
2022	1. California Earthquake Authority	First
2023	1. Department of Water Resources 2. Office of Public School Construction 3. California Department of Education 4. Division of State Architecture 5. California Public Utilities Commission 6. California Energy Commission	First
2024	1. University of California 2. California State University 3. California Community Colleges 4. Caltrans	First
2025	1. Health Care Access and Information Access	Second
2026	1. California Geological Survey	Second

As of September 14, 2026, Governor-signed **Assembly Bill 2471** expands the SSC from 15 to 17 members by adding representatives from the Office of the State Fire Marshal, the Department of Insurance, and the Strategic Growth Council to better coordinate emergency, financial, and urban planning risks. Operating **until January 1, 2030**, the legislation requires the SSC to deliver concrete policy recommendations to the California State Legislature on handling urban fires following major earthquakes and protecting critical lifeline infrastructure such as fuel, water, and power grids. This new legislation adds additional reports to the current structure.

To incorporate the following entities in the upcoming reporting year, all three newly added representative agencies will submit their reports to the SSC in 2027. Along with the new reporting agencies, the SSC will develop a reporting template to help all agencies understand the requirements and organize the data provided. A consistent format and data types will allow the SSC to condense and analyze report data across all agencies.

Based on current annual reporting, all agencies will be required to report on a five-year cycle; the SSC may modify or extend the reporting cycle as needed.

Once all reports are received utilizing new templates, the collected data will be compiled into a single report for the Legislature and the Governor's Office, summarizing the agencies' efforts.

Below is the **proposed five-year** reporting schedule.

The schedule might be adjusted to synchronize with the research priorities selected by the SSC and the initiatives required by **Assembly Bill 2471. Entities outside the list below might be invited to report to the SSC to support completion of the five-year work plan.**

Reporting Year	**CA Department or Agency**	**Number of Reports**
2027	1. Office of the State Marshal 2. Department of Insurance 3. Strategic Growth Council	First
2028	1. California Earthquake Authority	Second
2029	1. Department of Water Resources 2. Office of Public-School Construction 3. California Department of Education 4. Division of State Architecture 5. California Public Utilities Commission 6. California Energy Commission	Second
2030	1. University of California 2. California State University 3. California Community Colleges 4. Caltrans	Second
2031	**1. Proposed AB 100 Data Research Report**	First
2031	1. Health Care Access and Information Access	Third
2032	1. California Geological Survey	Third

Expert Consultation

An expert consultation is an informal, streamlined process for quickly gathering high-level advice from specialists without complex mathematical modeling or lengthy studies. Rather than relying on rigid, multi-round interviews, this method uses brief one-on-one phone calls, short email surveys, or brief group discussions to capture immediate qualitative insights.

This is common among public policy groups, businesses, and scientific committees, which rely on these rapid assessments to obtain the practical facts needed to make swift decisions under tight deadlines. The SSC will develop a process and a list of available experts to provide their specialist knowledge.

Other Administrative Matters

The SSC will continue to meet at least three times a year, as outlined in Assembly Bill 100; however, it is standard practice for the SSC to meet four times a year. Additionally, the SSC will hold one meeting per year in Southern California and one meeting per year in Northern California, outside Sacramento.

The SSC will also seek opportunities to assist with other seismic safety matters, including attending or presenting at conferences and promoting public safety through public education in collaboration with Cal OES and other emergency management and seismic safety entities. Further, the SSC will continue to draft, publish, and review research on seismic safety issues not explicitly listed in this plan.