

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 17, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall,

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2020 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we ask that you provide \$18.6 million for operations of the West Coast Earthquake Early Warning System, *ShakeAlert*.

The U.S. Geological Survey—in conjunction with the California Institute of Technology, the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Washington, the University of Oregon, the University of Nevada, Reno, and Central Washington University—is currently working to adapt the technology for the West Coast of the United States. The consortium has developed a prototype system for test users along the West Coast, including San Francisco’s Bay Area Rapid Transit, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Boeing production facilities in Washington, and Intel production facilities in Oregon.

Test users at the University of Southern California received 10 seconds of warning before feeling the shaking of a magnitude 5.3 earthquake that struck off the coast of Southern California on April 5, 2018. This is enough warning to take steps necessary to prevent casualties and mitigate destruction, including slowing or stopping trains and cars; pausing medical procedures; turning off supplies of oil, natural gas, and chemicals; securing large manufacturing equipment; stopping elevators and opening their doors; and securing sensitive computer data.

Earthquake Early Warning technology is already fully operational in countries like Japan and Mexico. Mexico built its early warning system after the catastrophic 1985 earthquake that killed thousands of people. That system is widely credited with saving countless lives in recent earthquakes.

The effectiveness of Earthquake Early Warning depends on the number and placement of sensors to ensure that there is adequate coverage wherever an earthquake may hit. Congress provided a total of \$21.1 million in the Fiscal Year 2019 Consolidated Appropriations bill, and continued funding is necessary to operate the system in order to provide an accurate and timely public warning.

We urge you to provide \$18.6 million for the operation of the *ShakeAlert* system so that the West Coast will be prepared for the next catastrophic earthquake. This is proven technology that will save lives and reduce the economic impact of an earthquake by far more than the cost to build this warning system.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator