

Written Testimony to Alaska SB137-Extend Seismic Hazards Safety Commission

From Dr. John Aho, Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission (ASHSC)

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My name is John Aho and I am a life-long Alaskan who currently serves on the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission (ASHSC). I am a 75-year resident of Anchorage and have been involved in seismic risk mitigation activities at the international, national, State, and local levels for 40-years,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony in support of extending the ASHSC termination date to June 30, 2020 as proposed in SB137 and supported by the current Legislative Budget and Audit Report (LBAR). The report's conclusion was that the ASHSC is operating in the public's interest.

A representative sample of current ASHSC activities include:

- Advocating mapping of active faults
- Planning and participating in post-earthquake safety evaluation of buildings training
- Development of Policy Recommendations to the Legislature
- Working with the Kodiak Island Borough (KIB), in conjunction with FEMA, to development a current Earthquake Planning Scenario for the KIB
- Development of an Earthquake Insurance informational brochure
- Public presentations on seismic risk mitigation issues
- Participation in organization of the 10th National Conference on Earthquake Engineering (10NCEE) to be held in Anchorage on July 21-25, 2014 anticipated to draw up to 1,000 experts to the State.
- Development of numerous "white papers" addressing seismic risk mitigation issues

These, in addition to many other items being addressed by the ASHSC, are important to overall risk mitigation activities and are **not addressed by other State agencies**. Additional information can be obtained from the ASHSC web site at www.seismic.alaska.gov.

The talented members of the ASHSC are true advocates who work hard and care deeply about the benefits of proactive efforts in seismic risk mitigation. Efforts in seismic safety can be challenging because many people seem indifferent to their benefits and dismiss good ideas about ways to make communities more resilient to the damaging effects of earthquakes.

The ASHSC is addressing areas that, if implemented, could prevent a potential future disaster from becoming a catastrophe. Each step, no matter how small, brings us closer to the goals of a safe and resilient State.

There is no doubt that the ASHSC is an important entity in the most seismically active State in the United States and should be extended in accordance with the LBAR recommendations.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB137.

Dr. John L. Aho, Ph.D., Sc.D.

