

HB

408

HFIN

FILE

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1998 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB408 (Fin)

Revision Date <u>4/27/98</u>	Dept. Affected <u>Office of the Governor</u>
Title <u>"An Act establishing the Alaska Seismic</u>	BRU <u>Commissions/Special Offices</u>
Hazards Safety Commission."	Component <u>Seismic Hazards Safety Commission</u>
Sponsor <u>Representative Davies</u>	
Requester <u>House Finance</u>	Component Serial No. _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04
Personal Services	11.9	9.7	9.7	9.7	10.0	10.0
Travel	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1
Contractual	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5
Supplies	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	27.0	24.8	24.8	24.8	25.1	25.1

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	27.0	24.8	24.8	24.8	25.1	25.1
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	27.0	24.8	24.8	24.8	25.1	25.1

Estimate of any current year (FY98) cost: 00

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time	1	1	1	1	1	1
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Fiscal note assumes 1/4 time clerical staff to support commission activity as technical support needs will be met by existing staff in the Department of Natural Resources; quarterly commission meetings -- 2 face-to-face and 2 teleconferenced. Travel costs reflect estimated meeting costs for 9 total commission members and one staff. Contractual reflects estimated postage, communication, advertising, and teleconference costs.

Fiscal note assumes existing departmental office space/equipment will be available for use by the part-time clerical staff position.

Prepared by <u>Michael A. Nizich, Administrative Director</u> <i>M. Nizich</i>	Phone <u>465-3876</u>
Division <u>Administrative Services</u>	Date <u>4/27/98</u>
Approved by <u>Jim Ayers, Chief of Staff</u> <i>J. Ayers</i>	Date <u>4/27/98</u>
Agency <u>Office of the Governor</u>	

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HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(11)

Date Referred to Committee: March 20, 1998

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Date of Committee Action: 4/23/98

The FINANCE Committee considered:

HB 408

HOUSE BILL NO. 408

SEISMIC HAZARDS SAFETY COMMISSION

"An Act establishing the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission."

recommends it be replaced
with the following committee substitute

CS HB 408 (FIN)

the same title
 a new title

additional referral to _____ Committee
 attached amendment(s)

ADOPTS: _____ Letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept)

APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date)

fiscal note(s) of of 900.

fiscal note(s) _____

zero fiscal note(s) _____

zero fiscal note(s) _____

SIGNING WITH RECOMMENDATIONS		DP	DNP	NR	AM
<i>Don Thernault</i>	Thernault			X	
<i>Edna Mulder</i>	Mulder	X			
<i>Tina Martin</i>	Martin			X	
<i>Vic Kohring</i>	Kohring				X
<i>J. Davis</i>	J. Davis	X			
<i>FOSTER</i>	FOSTER	X			
<i>Quissendont</i>	Quissendont	X			
<i>Carol E. Moses</i>	Moses	X			
<i>J. Davis</i>	J. Davis			X	
<i>Kelly</i>	Kelly	✓			

CO CHAIR'S SIGNATURE

Don Thernault
Thernault

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1998 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB408 (Fin)

Revision Date <u>4/24/98</u>	Dept. Affected <u>Office of the Governor</u>
Title <u>"An Act establishing the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission."</u>	BRU <u>Commissions/Special Offices</u>
Sponsor <u>Representative Davies</u>	Component <u>Seismic Hazards Safety Commission</u>
Requester <u>House Finance</u>	Component Serial No. _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04
Personal Services	11.9	9.7	9.7	9.7	10.0	10.0
Travel	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3
Contractual	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1
Supplies	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	27.8	25.6	25.6	25.6	25.9	25.8

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	27.8	25.6	25.6	25.6	25.9	25.9
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	27.8	25.6	25.6	25.6	25.9	25.9

Estimate of any current year (FY98) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time	1	1	1	1	1	1
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: *(Attach a separate page if necessary)*

Fiscal note assumes 1/4 time clerical staff to support commission activity as technical support needs will be met by existing staff in the Department of Natural Resources; quarterly commission meetings -- 2 face-to-face and 2 teleconferenced. Travel costs reflect estimated meeting costs for 9 total commission members and one staff. Contractual reflects estimated postage, communication, advertising, and teleconference costs.

Fiscal note assumes existing departmental office space/equipment will be available for use by the part-time clerical staff position.

Prepared by <u>Michael A. Nizich, Administrative Director</u> <i>M. Nizich</i>	Phone <u>65-3876</u>
Division <u>Administrative Services</u>	Date <u>4/24/98</u>
Approved by <u>Jim Ayers, Chief of Staff</u> <i>J. Ayers</i>	Date <u>4/24/98</u>
Agency <u>Office of the Governor</u>	

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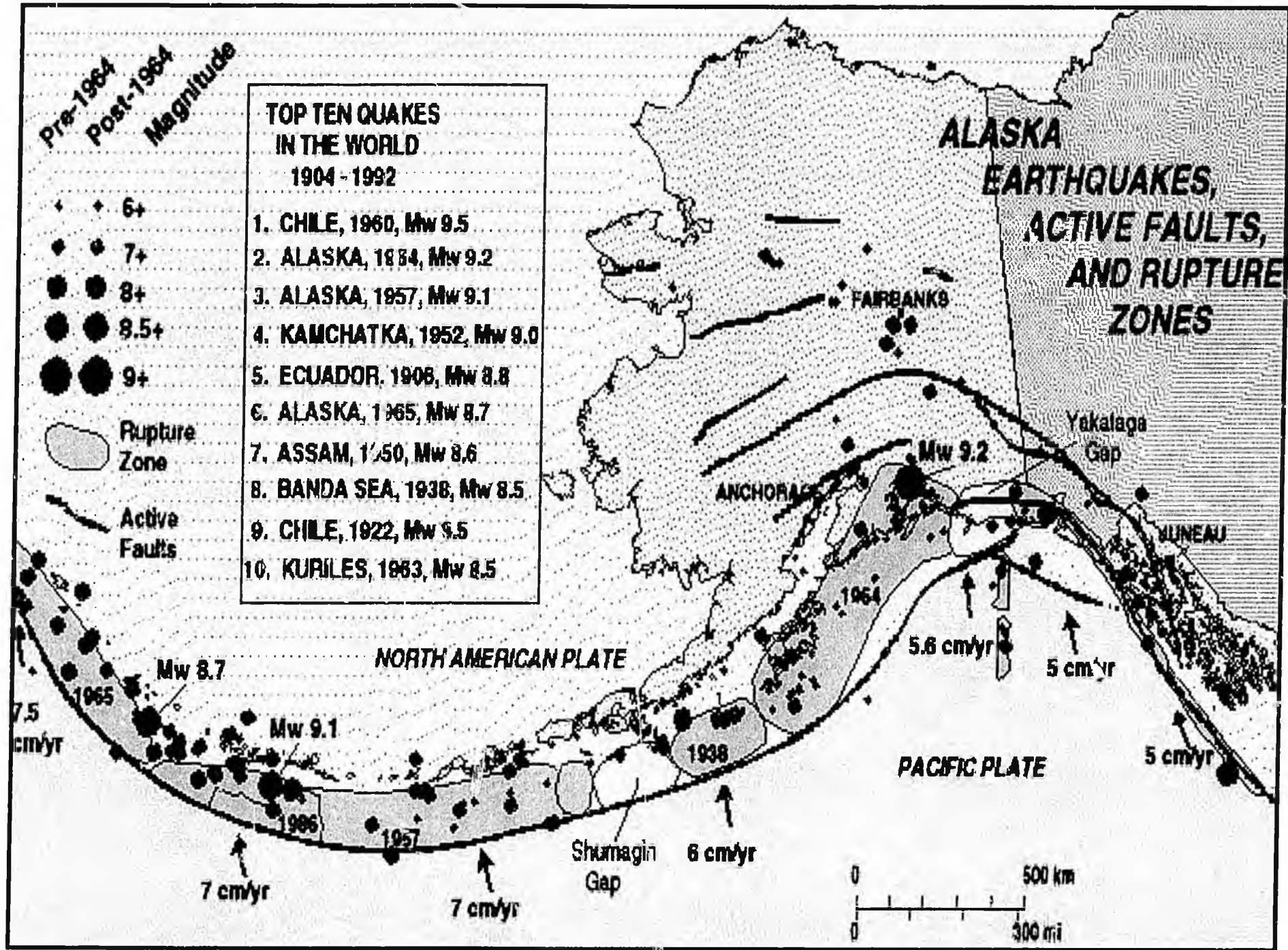
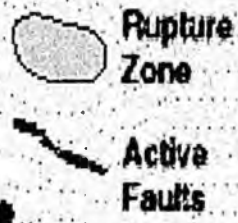
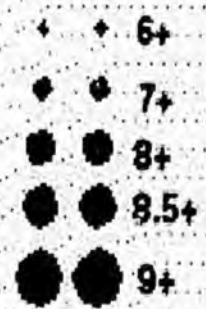
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4/23/98

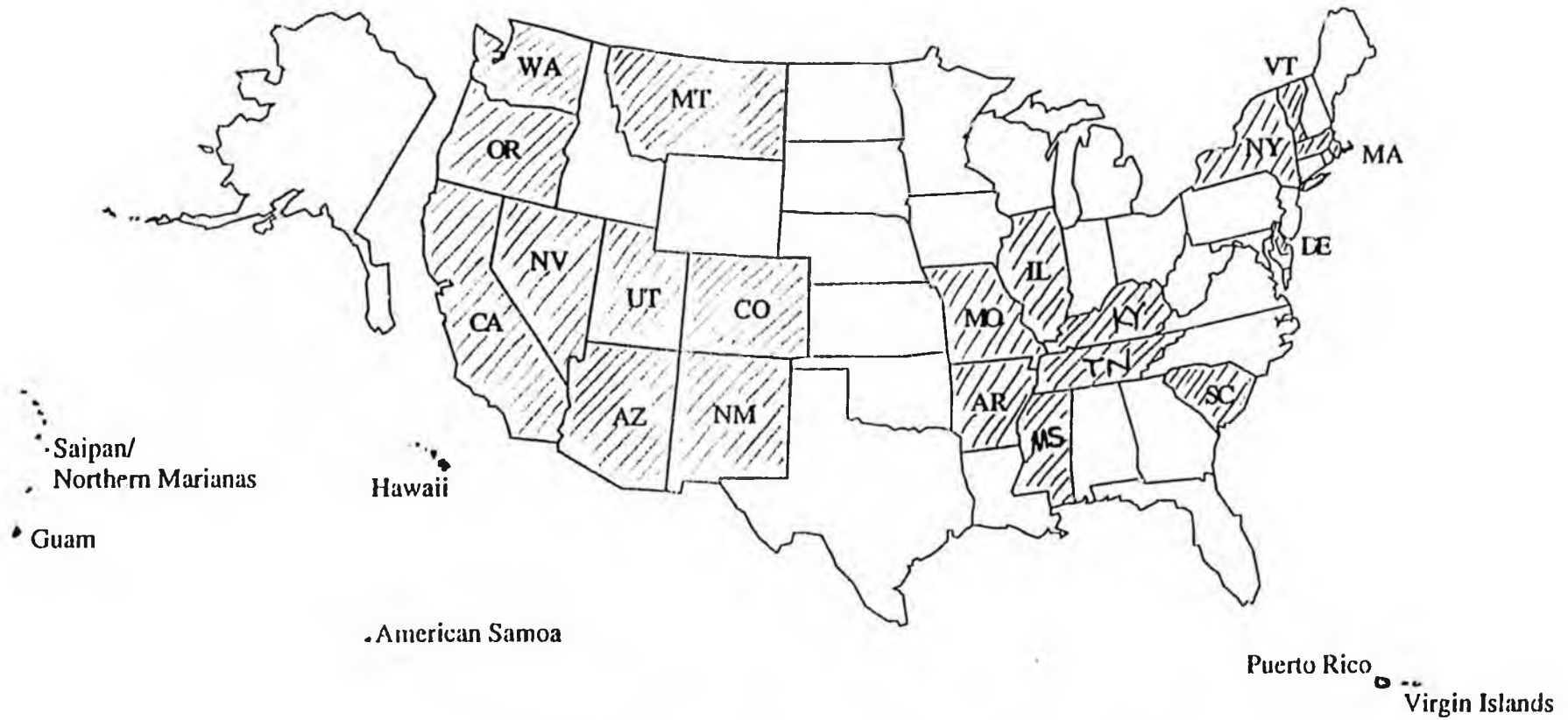
ALASKA EARTHQUAKES, ACTIVE FAULTS, AND RUPTURE ZONES

Pre-1964
Post-1964
Magnitude

- TOP TEN QUAKES IN THE WORLD 1904 - 1992**
1. CHILE, 1960, Mw 9.5
 2. ALASKA, 1884, Mw 9.2
 3. ALASKA, 1957, Mw 9.1
 4. KAMCHATKA, 1952, Mw 9.0
 5. ECUADOR, 1906, Mw 8.8
 6. ALASKA, 1965, Mw 8.7
 7. ASSAM, 1750, Mw 8.6
 8. BANDA SEA, 1938, Mw 8.5
 9. CHILE, 1922, Mw 8.5
 10. KURILES, 1863, Mw 8.5



4/23/98



National Seismic Safety Advisory Boards in 1996

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1998 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 408

Revision Date _____	Dept. Affected <u>Office of the Governor</u>
Title <u>"An Act establishing the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission."</u>	BRU <u>Commissions/Special Offices</u>
Sponsor <u>Representative Davies</u>	Component <u>Seismic Hazards Safety Commission</u>
Requester <u>House State Affairs</u>	Component Serial No. _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04
Personal Services	11.9	9.7	9.7	9.7	10.0	10.0
Travel	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3
Contractual	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5
Supplies	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	28.2	26.0	26.0	26.0	26.3	26.3

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	28.2	26.0	26.0	26.0	26.3	26.3
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	28.2	26.0	26.0	26.0	26.3	26.3

Estimate of any current year (FY98) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time	1	1	1	1	1	1
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Fiscal note assumes 1/4 time clerical staff to support commission activity as technical support needs will be met by existing staff in the Department of Natural Resources; quarterly commission meetings -- 2 face-to-face and 2 teleconferenced. Travel costs reflect estimated meeting costs for commission members and one staff. Contractual reflects estimated postage, communication, advertising, and teleconference costs.

Fiscal note assumes existing departmental office space/equipment will be available for use by the part-time clerical staff position.

Prepared by <u>Michael A. Nizich, Administrative Director</u> <i>[Signature]</i>	Phone <u>465-3876</u>
Division <u>Administrative Services</u>	Date <u>3/18/98</u>
Approved by <u>Jim Ayers, Chief of Staff</u> <i>[Signature]</i>	Date <u>3/18/98</u>
Agency <u>Office of the Governor</u>	

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FISCAL NOTE Bill Version: CSHB 408 (STA)

(H) Publish Date: 3/20/98

**STATE OF ALASKA
1998 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Revision Date: _____ Dept Affected: Natural Resources
 Title: An Act establishing the Alaska Seismic BRU: Resource Development
Hazards Safety Commission Component: Geological Development
 Sponsor: Rep. Davies
 Requestor: (H)STA Component Serial No. 1031

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04
OPERATING EXPENDITURES						
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CHANGE IN REVENUES (fund code)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04
1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type)						
TOTAL	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0

Estimate of any current year (FY98) cost: \$ 0.0

POSITIONS

	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04
FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Costs to DGGS resulting from HB408 would be for modest staff time (approximately one-half person-month per year) plus travel associated with meetings. Salary costs would be covered under an existing position in DGGS which has responsibilities in geologic hazards that are consistent with work on this commission. The travel costs indicated above (\$2,000 annually) assume four trips per year at an average cost of \$500 per trip.

Prepared by: Milt Wiltse, Director lrc Phone: (907) 451-5005
 Division: Geological & Geophysical Surveys Date: 18-Mar-98
 Approved by Commissioner: Milt Wiltse for John Chivers Date: 3-18-98
 Agency: Natural Resources

CS for HB 408 (STA)
CONCEPTUAL AMENDMENT #7
(0-LS1547/E version)

membership
to 9

4 from
general
public -

to fix a grammar

rotation of seats
3 - 2 yrs.
3 - 4 yrs
-- rest

Alaska State Legislature

Member
House Finance Committee
Legislative Budget Subcommittees
University of Alaska
Natural Resources
Environmental Conservation



119 N. Cushman Street Suite 207
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
(907) 454-3172
FAX (907) 451-9293
Email: Representative_John_Davies@legis.state.ak.us

While in Session
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-4457
FAX (907) 465-3519
1-800-928-4457

Representative John Davies District 29

SPONSOR STATEMENT

House Bill 408

"An act establishing the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission"

A Seismic Hazards Safety Commission needs to be established to address the pressing need to provide a consistent policy framework and a means for ongoing coordination of programs and public safety practices related to seismic hazards. Currently this need is not being addressed by any continuing state government organization. The Seismic Hazards Safety Commission would encourage long-term progress toward mitigating the effects of earthquakes.

Alaska is on the edge of the Pacific Plate, which acts like a relentless conveyor belt, moving about six centimeters a year. It is inevitable that there will be large earthquakes, the only question is when will they occur, not if they will occur. Although the state has made great improvements in disaster preparedness there has been little corresponding improvement in measures to reduce the disaster potential of major earthquakes and, consequently, to reduce dependence on disaster relief. Creating a seismic commission patterned after those in California, Oregon, Washington and other states on major fault lines will help address these issues. If you prepare for a major earthquake ahead of time and prepare appropriately, when the earthquake does occur less damage will occur, less lives will be lost and so the cost of recovery obviously will be less.

Through ten years experience as state seismologist I have extensive knowledge in this subject area. I have first hand experience with the difficulty of coordinating earthquake information for the university and state, federal, and municipal governments. Anchorage does have an active geo-tech advisory commission, but the state needs to strengthen that work while broadening efforts throughout the state. A Seismic Safety Hazards Commission can provide that strength.



The scientific community is working hard on earthquake prediction, but it is not yet a reality, except in the most general sense. We can predict in a probabilistic way where earthquakes are likely to occur so we can focus resources in those areas, but in terms of knowing the date and time of the occurrence of earthquakes we will not have that information for some time.

The state needs to mitigate possible effects of earthquakes by encouraging appropriate land use and building design so it can reduce loss of life, and property, as well as the costs of recovery when earthquakes occur. It costs a lot of money to rebuild after a large earthquake and, of course, there is no way to replace lost lives; so it is clearly worth spending some time and money before earthquakes occur to prepare for them. This commission would help us as a state to get better prepared.

Members of the commission would be appointed by the governor to represent the university and governmental agencies, as well as members of the public who are knowledgeable in earthquake hazard mitigation. The commission would recommend to the public and governmental sector goals and priorities for reducing earthquake effects. The commission will accept grant contributions and appropriations from public agencies, private foundations, and individuals. The authorities and responsibilities of other state agencies, boards, councils, commissions or of local governments are not intended to transfer to the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission.



National Earthquake Information Center

Earthquake Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

● Which States in the United States have the most earthquakes?
Alaska and California.

● Which State has the most damaging earthquakes?
California.

● Which States have the smallest number of earthquakes?
Florida and North Dakota.

● How many earthquakes of any given magnitude occur each year?

Descriptor	Magnitude	Average Annually
Great	8 and higher	1
Major	7 - 7.9	18
Strong	6 - 6.9	120
Moderate	5 - 5.9	800
Light	4 - 4.9	6,200 (estimated)
Minor	3 - 3.9	49,000 (estimated)
Very Minor	< 3.0	2 - 3 about 1,000 per day 1 - 2 about 8,000 per day

● Where do earthquakes occur?
Earthquakes can strike any location at any time. But history shows they occur in the same general patterns year after year, principally in three large zones of the earth.

The world's greatest earthquake belt, the circum-Pacific seismic belt, is found along the rim of the Pacific Ocean, where about 81 percent of the world's largest earthquakes occur. The belt extends from Chile, northward along the South American coast through Central America, Mexico, the West Coast of the United States, and the southern part of Alaska, through the Aleutian Islands to Japan, the Philippine Islands, New Guinea, the island groups of the Southwest Pacific, and to New Zealand. This earthquake belt was responsible for 70,000 deaths in Peru in May 1970, and 65 deaths and a billion dollars' damage in California in February 1971.

Why do so many earthquakes originate in this belt? This is a region of young, growing mountains and deep ocean trenches which invariably parallel mountain chains. Earthquakes necessarily accompany elevation changes in mountains, the higher part of the earth's crust, and changes in the ocean trenches, the lower part.



CH2MHILL

CH2M HILL
301 West Northern Lights Boulevard
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Tel 907.278.2551
Fax 907.277.8738

April 17, 1998

Representative Gene Therriault
Co-Chair, Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK

Dear Mr. Therriault:

Subject: HB408-Seismic Hazards Safety Commission

This correspondence is written in support of Dr. John Davies' HB408 which would establish a Seismic Hazards Safety Commission for the State of Alaska.

As you know, Alaska is located in the most seismically active area in the world with many areas of the State having the potential for extensive damage from a strong motion earthquake. It is essential that we recognize the fact that it is not a question of "whether" a damaging event will occur but rather "when" it will happen.

It is incumbent upon us to be proactive in strengthening earthquake safety in the State by developing and improving public policies related to reducing hazards and mitigating the effects of potentially damaging earthquakes. This approach is totally superior to being reactive after the event and having to concentrate our people and financial resources on victim extraction, debris removal, and reconstruction activities because of inadequate prior planning.

A Commission, as proposed in HB408, could be instrumental in setting State goals and priorities, devising criteria to promote seismic safety, recommending programs to reduce earthquake hazards, gathering, analyzing and disseminating information, encouraging research, sponsoring training, coordinating seismic safety activities at all government levels, and could review reconstruction activities after a damaging earthquake.

I would like to commend Dr. Davies in his efforts to establish this Commission and urge members of the Legislature to support him in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

CH2M HILL

John L. Aho, Ph.D.
Vice President

HB408 / DOCUMENT2

c: Representative John Davies
Rod Combelleck

JOHN C LAHR

Representative John Davies
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 422
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear John,

I am writing to lend my support to your effort to establish an Alaskan Seismic Hazards Safety Commission. Given that Alaska is the most seismically active state in the US and that many areas are growing rapidly or being developed for resources that are critically needed by the entire nation, it is important that the State makes every effort to mitigate the effects of future earthquakes. The ASHSC could play an important role in focusing and coordinating private, state, and federal efforts on the most critical areas.

I certainly hope you are successful in establishing this commission.

John C. Lahr

John C. and Jan H. Lahr
john-jan@lahr.org
914 10th Street
Golden, Colorado 80401
(303) 215-9913



A Division of DOWL, Incorporated

March 18, 1998
W.O. D00001

The Honorable John Davies
House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Room 422
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Subject: House Bill 408
Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission

Dear Representative: *JOHN*

As a practicing civil engineering in the State of Alaska I wholeheartedly support HB 408 pertaining to the establishment of a state Seismic Hazards Safety Commission. I have been practicing my profession in Alaska for over 22 years. My technical specialties are geotechnical engineering and earthquake engineering, so I routinely deal with the problems associated with seismic hazards and their mitigation throughout the state. Moreover, I have been a member of the Municipality of Anchorage Geotechnical Advisory Commission (GAC) for nearly 20 years (currently Chairman). In that role, I and my fellow commissioners have routinely advised the Municipality regarding identification and mitigation of seismic hazards in Anchorage.

Although major earthquakes seemingly are "rare" events, their consequences literally can be disastrous, as was demonstrated by the 1964 great Alaska earthquake. Because of the damage and loss of life that occurred in Anchorage in 1964, and due to the concerns of local engineers and earth scientists, Anchorage established the Geotechnical Advisory Commission to advise our local government officials and citizens about earthquake hazards that can affect our community. The GAC generally has been the only real resource in those matters Anchorage has been able to rely upon consistently and effectively through the years. I believe the commission has had a positive effect on how our community has developed, and how it has taken appropriate steps to mitigate the seismic hazards with which we must live. Most of these efforts have been, and continue to be, through identification and mapping of the local hazards, and recommending mitigation measures to preserve life safety and to minimize economic impacts when the next major quake impacts our city.

I believe it is imperative that the State Legislature of one of the most seismically active regions in the world establish a statewide Seismic Hazard Safety Commission to help its citizens and those responsible for their general well being understand the seismic environment in which they live, and how best to deal with the Hazards that can affect them.

John, I applaud your sponsorship of this bill and give it my full support. If there is anything else I can do for you in this matter, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely,
DOWL Engineers

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'David A. Cole'.

David A. Cole, P.E.
Principal

D00001.RepDavies.DAC.031898.kmp

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF GEOLOGICAL & GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

794 UNIVERSITY AVENUE, SUITE 200
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99709-3645
PHONE: (907) 451-5000
FAX: (907) 451-5050

GEOLOGIC MATERIALS CENTER
P.O. BOX 772805
EAGLE RIVER, ALASKA 99577-2305
PHONE: (907) 696-0079
FAX: (907) 696-0078

April 1, 1998

The Honorable John Davies
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Rm 430
Juneau, AK 99501-2133

Dear Representative Davies:

House Bill 408 "An Act establishing the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission" is a timely legislative initiative for protecting Alaska's growing population both physically and financially. Mitigation of natural disasters has become a national priority in the wake of devastating flood storm, and earthquake events in the contiguous United States. There is increasing federal reluctance to fund recovery efforts and increasing reluctance of private insurers to take on the potential liability for damages suffered from events that could have been mitigated but were not.

Seismic hazards are part of the reality of Alaska, and there is much that can be done to mitigate their effects. In coordination with the state's Emergency Response Commission, a well qualified oversight group charged to review and prioritize Alaska's seismic mitigation efforts can save lives and money. Effectiveness of a seismic safety commission has been frequently demonstrated in California, a state having many seismic similarities to Alaska. House Bill 408 is an important step in improving seismic hazard mitigation in Alaska, thereby reducing casualties and costs of responding to earthquake disasters.

Sincerely,



Milton A. Wiltse
Director & State Geologist

MAW/vjb

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF GEOLOGICAL & GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

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P.O. BOX 772805
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FAX (907) 696-0078

April 16, 1998

The Honorable Gene Therriault
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 511
Juneau, AK 99801

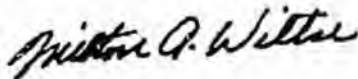
Dear Representative Therriault:

Representative Davies' recently-proposed legislation, HB 408, "An Act establishing the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission" has come at a good time to position Alaska with respect to federal disaster insurance legislation currently being drafted in Congress. While no one can predict the final form of legislation that will emerge from Washington, there is a growing resistance in Congress to federally fund recovery from disasters that might have been avoided or mitigated. This may take the form of requiring states to have seismic hazard mitigation policies or reviews of some kind in place in order to participate in federal seismic disaster recovery programs.

Alaska has long acknowledged the need for having contingency plans in place for responding to hazardous earthquakes, however, less policy attention has been given to systematic seismic hazard mitigation programs. A seismic hazards safety commission acting in coordination with Alaska's Emergency Response Commission would provide a pre-event mitigation overview now lacking in the state's efforts to protect its citizens from seismic risks.

I enclose a previous letter to Representative Davies in regard to HB 408. I believe this is good legislation for the people of Alaska.

Sincerely,



Milton A. Wiltse
State Geologist and Director

cc: Representative John Davies
Marty Rutherford, Deputy Commissioner

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF GEOLOGICAL & GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS

March 16, 1998

Rep. John Davies
State Capitol, Room 422
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Rep. Davies:

I would like to express my strong support for House Bill 408, "An Act establishing the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission." Seismic activity in Alaska is among the highest in the world and it is only a matter of time before another potentially destructive earthquake will strike one of our urban areas. Because these urban areas are expanding, and because we know that measures can be taken before an event to reduce casualties and economic losses, it is important that we improve our mitigation efforts. Establishing an Alaska seismic hazards safety commission is an important first step in coordinating state and local efforts in this area.

Much progress has been made in Alaska toward improving emergency-response planning, through the state Disaster Act and local preparedness exercises. However, less progress is evident in pre-disaster efforts to prevent losses and thereby reduce emergency-response needs. Such loss reduction can occur, for example, through more rigorous design and construction standards in areas more subject to earthquake damage. Although we cannot predict when and where the next large earthquake will occur, we can identify areas that will be most severely affected, and we can plan development accordingly. A seismic safety commission will help coordinate state and local efforts toward achieving these loss-reduction goals.

The California Seismic Safety Commission evolved from state advisory groups that were established as a result of Alaska's 1964 earthquake. This commission has been highly successful in initiating programs that have proven effective in reducing losses from numerous recent earthquakes. One recent article states that if there had been no seismic design standards in place prior to the 1994 Northridge earthquake, economic losses would have been 60% greater. The analysis further states that if today's standards had been strictly followed, losses would have been further reduced by 40%. Considering that the cost of complying with these standards is less than 5% of construction cost, implementing such loss-reduction measures is clearly worthwhile. Now that 34 years have passed since our last destructive earthquake, and before development expands further, it is time for Alaska to take similar steps toward reducing future earthquake losses. We can begin by passing HB 408.

Sincerely,



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April 15, 1998

Representative Gene Therriault
Alaska State Legislature

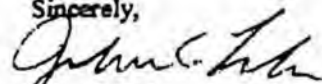
Dear Mr. Therriault:

I am pleased to learn that House Bill 408B to establish the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission was passed out of the House State Affairs committee in March and was referred to the Finance Committee, which you chair. Since I highly recommend that this legislation move forward quickly, I hope you will be able to schedule a hearing on it during the short time that remains this session.

From the late 1960's through just last year the focus of my seismology research has been on Alaska, so I am keenly aware of the hazards that earthquakes pose there. Although Alaska is far more tectonically active than California, it has the advantage of being less fully developed at this time. The Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission can therefore have a profoundly positive effect in mitigating the effects of earthquakes on the infrastructure to be built in the future. This is much more cost effective in the long run than remedial efforts that often are begun only after disastrous losses have occurred.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,


John C. Lahr