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June 14, 2023

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
254 Russell Senate Building
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
254 Russell Senate Building
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Chairwoman Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz,

I am writing on behalf of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) to express our strong support for the reauthorization of the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) and the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program (NWIRP). Both programs provide the needed research to better understand the impact of earthquakes and wind hazards. These research results are widely shared and inform the development of standards, such as [ASCE-7 Minimum Design Loads and Associated Criteria for Buildings and Other Structures \(ASCE/SEI 7-22\)](#), and other accepted consensus-based standards. Updated research on wind speeds and impacts is critical to ensure our building standards are current and strengthen resilience. The wind program has yet to receive any funding to update this data.

Founded in 1852, ASCE is the country's oldest civil engineering organization. Representing more than 150,000 civil engineers from private practice, government, industry, and academia, it is ASCE's objective to advance the science and profession of engineering to enhance the welfare of humanity. ASCE is a prominent stakeholder in efforts toward hazards mitigation and the protection of public health, safety, and welfare. ASCE develops and maintains standards, supports the funding of professional guideline-writing organizations, and works with governments at all levels to assist in mitigating the impacts of natural and human induced hazards.

National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program - Created by Congress in 1977, NEHRP has provided the resources and leadership that have led to significant advances in understanding the precise risk earthquakes pose and the best ways to counter those risks. The multi-agency program, which includes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), National Science Foundation (NSF), and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has engaged in seismic monitoring, mapping, research, testing, engineering, supporting code development, mitigation, and emergency preparedness. Although NEHRP is well known for its research programs, it is also the source for hundreds of new technologies, maps, design techniques, and standards that are used by design professionals every day to mitigate hazards and risks. NEHRP is a cost-effective and well-run program that has successfully reduced the risk of earthquakes.

National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program - Created by Congress in 2004 and modeled after NEHRP, NWIRP coordinates windstorm related research activities at the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), NSF, NIST, and FEMA. NWIRP has made strides in increasing the understanding of the impact of wind on structures. This includes significant improvements in hurricane forecasts and increased tornado warning times; advancements in the science of wind mapping to inform engineering-based design standards; improved coordination practices and research support for post windstorm investigations; and implementation of post windstorm research-based recommendations into codes, standards, and practices. However, despite the best efforts of the agencies involved, NWIRP has not received the funding needed to reach its potential.

Thank you for your leadership of these important issues. ASCE stands ready to provide any assistance that we can. For further information, please contact Martin Hight, ASCE's Senior Manager of Government Relations at mhight@asce.org of 202-789-7843. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria C. Lehman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Maria C. Lehman, P.E., NAC, ENV SP, F.ASCE
ASCE 2023 President