

# Seismic Rehabilitation Bond Funds

## Public K-12 Schools, Community Colleges, Emergency Facilities

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**Issue:** Students should be in safe school buildings that will survive during earthquakes. Communities should have operable emergency facilities (EF) including fire, police and hospital services after earthquakes.

**School and EF Laws:** Since 2001, public school and community college buildings, with greater than 250 students, and EFs have been required by law to be mitigated to ensure safer, more secure educational environments and safer communities (<http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/455.html>).

**Schools and EFs at Risk:** In the May 2007 earthquake in China, more than 19,000 school children died when schools collapsed. If a magnitude 9 Cascadia earthquake were to strike Oregon tomorrow, state studies indicate that the damage could be equally as tragic.

Over 1,000 high occupancy school buildings are at "Very High" or "High Risk" for collapse in major earthquakes. About 300,000 school children attend 614 schools with these 1,000 dangerous buildings that could collapse with school children inside them.

**What's Needed?** Request your Legislators to issue seismic rehabilitation bonds in 2009. In 2002, Oregonians voted and approved these bonds. In 2008, the Governor recommended to the Legislature to issue \$30 million of bonds in 2009-2011. Currently, the Legislature is determining the state's budget. In order to provide grants for seismic upgrades through Oregon Emergency Management's Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program, XI-M and XI-N bonds need to be issued by the State Treasury.

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**Background**

Oregon's school study results indicate the median age of Oregon school buildings is 46 years with almost 1,200 high occupancy school buildings over 50 years old. Because the first statewide building code was not adopted until 1974, and it was not until 1994 that seismic considerations were added to the building code, many schools are in desperate need of seismic strengthening and basic upgrades.

In 2007, the State of Oregon evaluated 1,101 schools in 170 districts representing 97% of the total enrollment. A comprehensive school building and EF database with these five key parameters that determine the relative seismic risk of each building: 1) Seismicity Zone (how hard the ground is expected to shake), 2) Building Structural Type, 3) Building Irregularities, 4) Original Construction Date, and 5) Soil Type (softer soils amplify the severity of ground motion) is available at [www.oregongeology.com/sub/projects/rvs](http://www.oregongeology.com/sub/projects/rvs) (search specific schools at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=2061>).

Improving physical deficiencies of aging schools and emergency facilities is a sound, long-term investment of fundamental importance to communities. Investments towards safe school children and emergency facilities provide economic vibrancy. Portland Monthly writes on seismic school safety: <http://www.portlandmonthlymag.com/issues/archives/articles/0309-quakes/>

**Timeline of Major Events**

**2001** Five bills introduced by Sen. Gary George (R) on behalf of Sen. Peter Courtney (D) as part of OSSPAC. SB 13, 14, 15 and SJR 21 and 22. All passed. Drills required of large employers (private and public). SJRs created ballot measures. Law (ORS 455.400) requires schools and emergency facilities to be seismically safe.

**2002** Ballot Measures 21 and 22. Both passed. Create Articles XI-M and XI-N which allows state to issue bonds for seismic upgrades.

**2005** SB 2, 3, 4 and 5 bills introduced by Sen. President Peter Courtney (D) on *Safe school children and Safer communities*. Directs Dept of Geology (Dogami) to conduct statewide risk study. The 2007 DOGAMI report indicates about 1,000 school buildings can collapse. Directs Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) to start grant program. Allows Dept of Administrative Service (DAS) and Treasury to issue XI-M and XI-N bonds.

**2007** SB 1 provides Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) funds for 4 new staff to establish grant program.

**2008** \$30 million for general obligation bonds for seismic mitigation in the Governor's recommended budget. (<http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/BAM/GRB0911intro.shtml>, see public safety section, page D-3).

**2009** Legislature will determine bond amounts for XI-M bonds for schools and XI-N bonds for emergency facilities.