



PETER COURTNEY

President of the Senate

June 9, 2010

Patricia Sutch, Executive Director
Western States Seismic Policy Council
801 K Street, Suite 1436
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Sutch:

The Oregon State Legislature is deeply honored to be the recipient of the 2010 Western States Seismic Policy Council Award in Excellence for Legislation. I regret that neither I nor a representative will be able to attend the July 9th Awards in Excellence Banquet.

Thank you for recognizing our efforts to reduce earthquake-related losses by passing Senate Bill 5505. This legislation provided \$30 million for the Oregon Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program. As I said in my testimony, we know that when (not IF) we get our earthquake, it will likely be much more severe than previously thought...more than even our experts previously expected.

The passage of SB 5505 was not an easy process. In 2002, Oregon citizens approved funds for seismic safety, but not one upgrade was funded with this money. In 2005, the Legislature created a grant program, yet not one seismic upgrade was funded. In July 2007, directed by the Oregon Legislature, the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries issued a report that there were 1,111 school buildings at 614 schools in Oregon at risk of collapse. Approximately 300,000 students were in attendance at these schools along with faculty, staff and volunteers. The 2007 Legislature responded by funding positions to administer the grant program, yet only one person was hired and not one seismic upgrade was funded. Needless to say, I was getting frustrated.

Finally, in 2009, I requested a bill that designated bonding funds in the legislative budget for the seismic rehabilitation grant program. I am excited to say the shovels are hitting the ground this summer on two projects. One is at McKay Elementary School in Beaverton, Oregon, and the other is at Linn Benton Community College in Albany, Oregon. More projects are being scheduled.


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Page two

Thank you for the work of the Western States Seismic Policy Council. Also, thank you for recognizing the Oregon State Legislature's achievement to reduce the loss and devastation that can occur as a result of earthquakes.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter Courtney". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Senator Peter Courtney
President of the Senate