

**Advisory Committee on Earthquake Hazards Reduction  
National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program**

November 21, 2016

The Honorable Willie E. May  
Director  
National Institute of Standards and Technology  
Building 101, Room A1134  
100 Bureau Drive  
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-1000

Dear Dr. May:

We submit the following comments to you and the Interagency Coordinating Committee (ICC) as part of the charter to the Advisory Committee on Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (ACEHR). This letter is based on an ACEHR meeting held November 9-10, 2016.

While any Presidential transition period leaves many uncertainties about agency priorities, we are pleased to see the shared commitment of NEHRP agency staff to carry forward important initiatives for advancing progress toward an earthquake resilient nation. We are also pleased to hear that members and designees of the ICC for NEHRP met in August to affirm key agency commitments toward this goal.

We encourage the ICC and relevant federal agency leaders to use the transition period to develop plans to address the issues raised in our previous ACEHR reports concerning NEHRP reauthorization, program coordination, program emphases, and renewed funding. In the short term, we specifically recommend that:

1. **The ICC meet again by December 31, 2016 as agreed to at its August 2016 meeting.** The August meeting was important for revitalizing the ICC and addressing the future of NEHRP, how the NEHRP agencies can work together to move the Program ahead, and of the commitments of individual agencies to advancing NEHRP efforts as they relate to other agency priorities. These discussions are crucial to emphasizing the importance of NEHRP in all the agencies' transition planning.
2. **The ICC or NEHRP program senior staff initiate the type of implementation gap assessment that we recommended in the 2015 and 2016 ACEHR reports.** We understand that the ICC acknowledged the value, for the future of NEHRP, of undertaking an assessment of the nation's earthquake risk reduction progress to date and the remaining gaps. We once

again strongly endorse the need for this study and urge that it be initiated as a top priority with new funds for it provided to the NEHRP Secretariat. ACEHR discussed a range of potential approaches for undertaking such an assessment at its November meeting. An ACEHR subcommittee can be formed to help in the design of the study.

**3. The NEHRP Director role should remain a permanent senior staff position at NIST.**

The upcoming retirement of the current NEHRP Director at NIST will be filled by an acting Director. A permanent appointment should be made as soon as possible.

Submitted on behalf of the ACEHR members who fully endorse these comments.

Respectfully,

*Signed by Laurie A. Johnson*  


Laurie A. Johnson, PhD AICP  
Chair  
Advisory Committee on Earthquake Hazards Reduction  
National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program

cc: Kent Rochford, Associate Director for Laboratory Programs, NIST

