

NEHRP Office -- This is a new section for the Annual Report because last year we did not distinguish between NIST and the NEHRP office. Most likely this section will go at the end of the Program Effectiveness and Needs section, after the USGS section.

## 2.5 NEHRP Office

- **Recommendation 1:** *(Bullet borrowed from first half of bullet #1 in Jim Harris's section on NIST)* NIST must secure the funding to effectively carry out its role as lead agency for the Program.
- **Recommendation 2:** NIST must plan for the development of multidisciplinary expertise within its own staff and foster relationships with other public agencies and private-sector entities to effectively fulfill its obligations as lead agency.
- **Recommendation 3:** NIST must determine the appropriate staff and resources to carry out expanded responsibilities as the lead agency for multihazard risk reduction. (To be added if the multi hazard legislation is approved and funded by Congress.)

In the years before the 2004 NEHRP reauthorization, NIST's role within NEHRP was relatively minor and not fully realized because of a very low level of funding. FY 2005 brought a substantial change to NIST: it became the designated lead agency for NEHRP. Although NIST's direct budget for NEHRP has not been increased concomitantly with its responsibilities, the agency internally reallocated funds to establish the NEHRP Secretariat and hire a Program Director. The NEHRP office has also received valuable in-kind staff support from other NEHRP agencies.

The NEHRP Lead Agency Office has been in place for nearly five years. NIST has taken seriously the assignment to lead the Program by providing overall coordination, direction, and support of joint efforts consistent with Congressional intent and centered upon objectives defined by the authorizing legislation. ACEHR appreciates the ongoing interest and support which are evident from the highest levels of the agency. The office of the NEHRP Director is to be commended for its open approach to planning and leveraging resources by actively partnering with the earthquake professional community and by participating in regional consortia. NIST has fostered a strong level of interaction among the agencies participating in NEHRP. There has been notable outreach to interested stakeholders. The development process for the 2008–2012 NEHRP Strategic Plan is just one example of this successful interaction. The current work to develop a road map for earthquake engineering research will require continued strong leadership and sustained commitment to this collaborative philosophy.

NEHRP authorizing legislation (HR 3820) recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, gives NIST several new or expanded responsibilities, including the responsibility for coordinating post earthquake investigations, broad dissemination of field observations, as well as the identification of areas where findings have implications for codes, and a report on the

outcome on code modification to Congress, but not only does the current House legislation fail to provide specific funds to enable NIST to carry out these important new responsibilities, the legislation significantly cuts back the authorized funding levels for NIST, NSF and FEMA. The previous policy of not providing funding for specific lead agency functions has not changed, and remains a source of considerable concern to ACEHR. It is not currently known whether the Senate will accept the House version or draft its own authorizing legislation.

In our previous Annual Report, ACEHR endorsed a transfer of responsibility for coordination of post earthquake investigations to NIST. The House legislation includes this transfer of responsibility to NIST, but we are concerned that no additional funding has been provided for this significant new responsibility. In a related move, ACEHR called for a Post-Earthquake Information Management System (PIMS), to collect and manage field data on earthquake impacts. PIMS is not explicitly mentioned in HR 3820 so if this system is to become a reality in the coming year, alternative sources of disaster related funding will have to be identified to develop and operationalize this program.

*(Note: I am not sure how much to say, if anything, about the all hazards focus that may or may not happen depending on the final reauthorizing legislation and whether anything hazards, such as wind, actually receive appropriations. In light of the dramatic losses in Haiti and Chile, NEHRP has an opportunity to serve as a model for the other areas of disaster reduction....This concept needs to show up somewhere in the full report, but not necessarily in this section.)*