

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2026

Chairman Mike Simpson  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Chellie Pingree  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree:

As you craft the Fiscal Year 2027 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you provide the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) with \$32.6 million for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a West Coast Earthquake Early Warning System (EEW), also called ShakeAlert.

The USGS has been working with the California Institute of Technology; the University of California, Berkeley; the University of Washington; the University of Oregon; the University of Nevada, Reno; Central Washington University, and state emergency services agencies to develop and deploy the system. ShakeAlert detects waves radiating from the epicenter of an earthquake, and the ShakeAlert signal can be used to provide people with several to tens of seconds of warning in California, and up to a few minutes in Washington and Oregon through their phones, computers, and other media. This is a “smart infrastructure” investment to provide advance notice so people can take cover, automated systems can be triggered to slow down trains and manage the power grid, doctors can pause surgeries, and other critical actions can be taken to protect lives and infrastructure.

Between October 17, 2019, and September 1, 2023, the ShakeAlert system generated alerts for 95 events with estimated magnitudes of 4.5 or greater, which is the threshold for public alerting. Of these, 94 were actual earthquakes, highlighting the system’s reliability. ShakeAlert public alerts, both using the Wireless Emergency Alerts system and smartphone app capabilities, first became available across California in 2019. Oregon began statewide public use of ShakeAlert in March 2021, and Washington began statewide use of ShakeAlert public alerting in May 2021.

With concern regarding the heightened risk of a major earthquake resulting from increased seismic activity near the San Andreas Fault, coupled with the prospect of a magnitude 9.0 earthquake along the Pacific Northwest coast, there is public demand for EEW to be fully operational. When major earthquake events occur—and we know it is “when” and not “if”—they have the potential to be one of the costliest and deadliest disasters the United States has ever faced. FEMA has estimated that earthquakes cost the United States, averaged over the long term, more than \$5 billion a year. This common-sense investment will save lives, protect businesses, and significantly improve the speed of local recovery while reducing costs for the federal government and minimizing economic disruption. With a buildout completion rate of 97 percent for the Pacific Northwest, we are continuing to make significant progress while securing funding for this life-saving technology. Let’s build this robust system now, so that when the inevitable massive quake occurs—and we know it will—we can mitigate the injuries, destruction, and chaos as much as possible.

ShakeAlert’s success depends not only on its own dedicated funding, but on the health of the broader USGS Earthquake Hazards Program. The program supports the seismic monitoring networks, ground motion research, hazard assessments, and real-time data infrastructure that ShakeAlert depends upon to function effectively. The program also conducts critical research into earthquake sources, strong ground

shaking, and regional hazard characterization that directly informs the alert thresholds and performance standards for ShakeAlert. In short, ShakeAlert is only as strong as the Earthquake Hazards Program that underpins it. We urge the Committee to also consider increased funding for the Earthquake Hazards Program for FY 2027 to ensure this program can meet the growing demands of both the early warning system and the nation's broader earthquake preparedness needs.

We appreciate the increased support the Committee has provided in recent fiscal years. In order to continue supporting USGS in executing its revised technical implementation plan with partners in California, Oregon, Washington, and Nevada, we are seeking to fund the ShakeAlert program at \$32.6 million in FY 2027. This funding will address the rising cost of operations and maintenance which is critical for sustaining the effectiveness of the program.

While we cannot predict when and where the next major earthquake will hit, we must do all we can to prepare ourselves so that we can mitigate the injuries, destruction, and chaos as much as possible. We appreciate your consideration of our request, and we look forward to working with you.

Thank you, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



George Whitesides  
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress



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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
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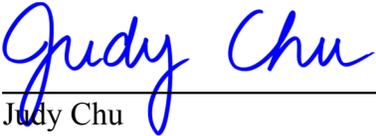
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Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



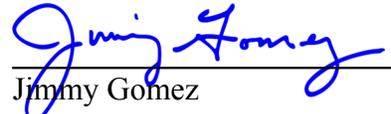
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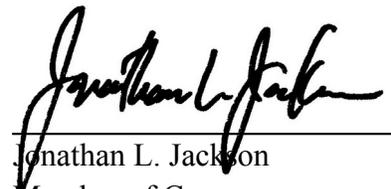
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