

Schiff calls for states to match USGS funding of earthquake early warning system

André Coleman, Pasadena Weekly, 8-6-15

Saying implementation of an earthquake early warning system is something the federal government can't do alone, US Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank) praised the US Geological Survey for providing \$4 million to Caltech and three other universities working on creating such a system.

"We are constantly reminded of our vulnerability — with tremors, earthquakes and aftershocks rattling our homes and business — and even a few seconds of warning will allow people to seek cover, slow or stop trains, pause surgeries and more," Schiff said in a prepared statement.

But, he said, Congress can't do it alone.

Caltech, UC Berkeley, the University of Washington and the University of Oregon, in conjunction with USGS, have developed a limited warning system that is apparently working. Building the system for the entire West Coast will cost an estimated \$38.2 million, with \$16.1 million in annual operating costs.

On Aug. 28 2014, the system alerted people in San Francisco to a magnitude 6.0 quake seconds before it struck.

"Earthquake, earthquake," declared the warning's electronic voice. "Light shaking expected in three seconds."

The quake struck six miles southwest of Napa, according to Caltech, injuring 120 people, including three critically, and left 7,000 people without power. The temblor caused an estimated \$1 billion in property damage.

Despite the brief warning, former Pasadena resident Ronda Carson, who now lives in the Bay Area, told the Weekly that she was still able to get to safety.

"I got in survival mode real quick, just in that small amount of time. I started looking for what I needed if I had to leave my place," Carson said days after the quake.

"It's time for our West Coast state governments and local partners to do their part with matching funding for this invaluable system," Schiff said.