
Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 1, 2016



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SCAG, Dr. Lucy Jones Center Launch Earthquake Preparedness Initiative to Help Cities across Southern California Prepare for the Next Earthquake

Los Angeles, CA - Responding to the interest in earthquake safety by local communities, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is working with Dr. Lucy Jones and her Center for Science and Society to help the nearly 200 cities in the region address their known seismic vulnerabilities.

The goal of SCAG's Earthquake Preparedness Initiative is to protect the Southern California economy from the predictable disruption that will result from a large regional earthquake.

The Initiative will provide education about the earthquake risk and policy approaches to reduce the risk to local governments. Drawing on Dr. Jones's experience helping the City of Los Angeles create its *Resilience by Design* strategies, this partnership will help cities understand what is at stake in their communities and how to generate support for policies to reduce the risk.

The Initiative will include a series of regional seminars led by Dr. Jones for city leaders that will cover earthquake risks and effective approaches to developing consensus on actions, especially with regard to strengthening infrastructure and the built environment. Dr. Jones will also lead workshops to help cities develop unique policy approaches suited to each community.

To address the problems of vulnerable infrastructure and interdependence of lifelines such as transportation, the project also will bring together local officials and utility operators to understand the nature and extent of the risks, approaches that have worked in other regions, and develop a plan for Southern California.

"I'm proud to work with SCAG and the cities of Southern California to help reduce the risk we face," said Dr. Jones. "After serving 33 years in the federal government, I'm eager to work with local governments to strengthen the region and provide information and science to support risk-reducing policies."

Michele Martinez, a Santa Ana City Council Member and President of SCAG, said the Initiative addresses a critical need within the region.

“Having access to the tools and techniques to prepare our communities for a major earthquake should be an urgent priority for all of us,” Martinez said. “The potential disruption is unimaginable, which makes an initiative such as this even more important.”

Hasan Ikhata, Executive Director of SCAG, said the region is fortunate to be able to tap into the expertise of Dr. Jones and the Center for Science and Society.

“There is no one in the seismic field more respected or qualified than Lucy Jones. To be able to partner with her and her team truly is a gift,” Ikhata said.

The initiative builds on efforts SCAG has undertaken in recent years, including its support for the original ShakeOut and the Southern California Risk Reduction Initiative, of which Ikhata was co-chair. Through that initiative, a report was released highlighting the need to support local governments in this effort.

“Providing that support is SCAG’s commitment to its members and the region,” Ikhata said.

Traditionally, policy has tended to focus on the life safety aspects of seismic safety leading to a great reduction in the loss of life in California earthquakes. However, Southern California is now facing the very real possibility that a great earthquake could permanently cripple the regional economy through disruption to lifelines and unusable buildings. The region needs greater collaboration to fix the shared vulnerabilities to prepare for the inevitable future earthquakes.

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About SCAG

SCAG is the nation’s largest metropolitan planning organization, representing six counties, 191 cities and more than 18 million residents. SCAG undertakes a variety of planning and policy initiatives to plan for a livable and sustainable Southern California now and in the future. For more information about SCAG, please visit: www.scag.ca.gov.

About the Dr. Lucy Jones Center for Science and Society

The Dr. Lucy Jones Center for Science and Society, founded by Dr. Lucy Jones after more than three decades of public service as a seismologist with the US Geological Survey, fosters the understanding and application of scientific information in the creation of more resilient communities. Working with both the public and private sectors, The Center will increase communities’ ability to adapt and be resilient to the dynamic changes of the world around them. More information can be found at DrLucyJonesCenter.org.