

DRAFT SUPPORT LETTER FOR AB 1505

Freddie Rodriguez, Chair
Emergency Management Committee
California State Assembly
Capitol Office, Room 2188
P.O. Box 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249-0052

Dear Assemblymember Rodriguez:

**RE: SUPPORT FOR AB 1505 TO PRESERVE MATCHING GRANT FUNDING TO
PROTECT AFFORDABLE MULTIFAMILY HOUSING FROM EARTHQUAKES**

On behalf of the City Council of the City of Carson, we are writing to express our strong support for restoring funding for the California Seismic Retrofitting Program for Soft Story Multifamily Housing to protect thousands of our state's residents from earthquakes. Authored by Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez, a bi-partisan vote by the Legislature placed this program in the FY 2022-23 budget via SB 189 with \$250-million in funding approved for FY 2023-24. The budget was signed by Governor Newsom on June 20, 2022. More recently, however, the proposed budget for FY 2023-24 omitted this funding.

This program is intended to provide matching grant funding to assist "mom and pop" owners of apartment buildings with 2 to 20 units to do seismic retrofits to protect California's supply of Affordable Multifamily Housing from earthquakes. After a difficult time of collecting rents during the Covid-19 pandemic, many of these owners say they simply do not have sufficient funds available to do these retrofits. AB 1505 can help!

We must learn from the past!

This seismic retrofit program will help prevent the type of death and destruction California experienced in the Northridge earthquake 29 years ago when 57 people died -- 16 in one apartment building. Another 9,000 were injured and thousands were displaced from their homes. The earthquake inflicted some \$93-billion in damage -- the most costly quake in U.S. history. Your continued support can help to prevent a repeat of such devastation.

Our State badly needs this important public safety project.

California's exposure to annual loss from earthquakes ranks among the highest in the nation, and we know that the estimated 100,000 soft-story apartment buildings built prior to 1978 are among the most likely to collapse in earthquakes. Although we don't know exactly when or where earthquakes will strike, we do know that virtually all areas of California face serious risks of earthquake related deaths, injuries and property damage. These older, affordable buildings provide critical housing for as many as 2.5 million Californians, many of whom are elderly, working families, disadvantaged populations and students. We need to act now to protect our most vulnerable from our greatest natural hazard -- earthquakes.

Our City is also very concerned that tenants in older apartments buildings face greater risk of death and injury from earthquakes simply because they cannot afford to live in newer buildings built to modern codes. Failure to fund this program could lead to disproportionate death tolls in Black and Latino areas. We need to correct this problem, and believe that AB 1505 represents an excellent approach to making Californians safer from earthquakes.

In addition to making people living in apartments safer from earthquakes, this program will preserve our existing housing supply and create new, good paying construction jobs. We need this type of legislation to keep our economy moving ahead. This legislation will be a boost for people living throughout California.

Thank you for your leadership on earthquake safety in the California State Assembly. I hope that Assembly Emergency Management Committee and the full Assembly will act soon restore this vitally needed funding to the State budget.

Your efforts to make the State of California safer and better prepared in the face of natural disasters and other emergencies is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,