



**Date:** June 1, 2023

**Contact:** Taylor Gonsalves

**Phone:** (916) 319-2053

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Legislation Reaffirming the Intent to Appropriate Funds for the Seismic Retrofitting Program for Soft Story Multifamily Housing Advances**

**(Sacramento, CA) – (Sacramento, CA)** – Yesterday, Assembly Bill (AB) 1505, authored by Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez (D – Pomona), advanced to the State Senate. This legislation would reaffirm the Legislature’s intent to appropriate \$250 million for the Seismic Retrofitting Program for Soft Story Multifamily Housing. Last year, Assemblymember Rodriguez successfully obtained this funding in the 2023-24 General Fund of the Budget Act. As we are now facing a difficult budget year, the funding is proposed to be cut. AB 1505 will reaffirm the intention for this program to be appropriated so we can protect our most vulnerable populations from complete devastation in an earthquake.

“When I reflect on my experiences as a first responder during the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, I see deaths, injuries, and multiple collapsed buildings that could have been avoided. After speaking with experts in this area, we found the best solution would be providing State funding to aid our most vulnerable populations in undergoing seismic retrofits. We are overdue for another major earthquake, and this program will allow us to prevent complete devastation and unnecessary deaths,” **stated Assemblymember Rodriguez.**

The U.S. Resiliency Council estimates that as many as 2.5 million Californians live in these older, soft-story, multifamily buildings that are at risk of collapse in an earthquake. Studies show that protecting existing affordable housing costs \$5-10k per unit. In stark contrast, producing new affordable housing costs between \$575-800k. In addition to the cost-effective benefit of this program, the timeline of retrofitting these buildings is very quick, displacing families for a short time, if at all.

[The U.S. Geological Survey’s ShakeOut Scenario](#) projects what would follow a 7.8 magnitude earthquake in Southern California, specifically on the San Andreas Fault. Researchers projected nearly 1,800 deaths, 50,000 injuries, destruction of major utilities, and destruction of major freeways connecting the region to Phoenix and Las Vegas. This funding is a common-sense approach to protecting our residents and the places they call home.

“The U.S. Resiliency Council commends Chairman Rodriguez for his hard work in passing AB 1505 through the Assembly. Funds appropriated for the seismic retrofit of vulnerable soft story apartments will protect thousands of California’s most vulnerable residents and preserve housing already in such short supply. The USRC is proud to have sponsored Chairman Rodriguez’s legislation, which will become a model for other states to follow,” **stated Evan Reis, Executive Director US Resiliency Council.**

###

*Assemblymember Rodriguez ([Twitter](#)) represents the 53<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District which includes the cities of Chino, Montclair, Ontario, Pomona, and Upland. He is Chair of the Assembly Committee on Emergency Management.*