

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS**
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, California 94102-3688

Summary

TO: Members of the Judicial Council

FROM: AOC Office of Court Construction and Management
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Clifford Ham, Principal Architect, 415-865-4043, clifford.ham@jud.ca.gov
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DATE: October 9, 2007

SUBJECT: Authorization for the AOC to Administer a Joint Powers Authority (JPA)
Formed by Counties to Manage Risk Associated With Seismic-Related
Damage to Seismic Level V Trial Court Facilities
(Action Required)

Issue Statement

Pursuant to Government Code section 70324, counties may transfer to the state a trial court facility with a Level V seismic rating (“Level V Facility”) by either retaining responsibility for seismic-related damage to the Level V Facility or by agreeing with the Judicial Council on a method to address the seismic issue so that the state does not have a financial burden greater than if the court facility had transferred as a court facility with a level IV seismic rating.¹ Council approval is required to establish a method for counties to address the seismic issue so that the state does not have a financial burden greater than if the court facility had transferred as a court facility with a Level IV seismic rating.

Recommendation

Following enactment of SB10 a state-county “SB 10 Seismic Issues Working Group” (the “Working Group”) was formed comprising representatives of the executive branch, the AOC, the counties, and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). The Working Group developed a proposed alternative method to address the counties’

¹ This statement assumes that legislation is enacted to extend beyond June 30, 2007, the authority of the state and the counties pursuant to Government Code section 70321 to enter into agreements transferring responsibility for court facilities to the state. As of the end of the regular 2007 legislative session on September 14, 2007, such legislation had not been passed.

liability under section 70324. As a result of the Working Group's recommended actions, the staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts recommends that the Judicial Council take the following actions:

1. Authorize the AOC to take a lead role in establishing a JPA that will comprise some or all of the counties transferring Level V Facilities, for the purpose of establishing a multijurisdictional seismic risk pool and thereby facilitating transfers of Level V Facilities.
2. Authorize the AOC to coordinate with counties that wish to participate in the JPA to (a) develop a governance model, (b) refine the JPA's mission, and (c) document the foregoing in a binding agreement establishing the Earthquake Recovery Indemnity Authority (ERIA) as the JPA described in this report.
3. Authorize the AOC, either directly or through a nonprofit corporation established by the AOC, to provide administrative support services to the ERIA in accordance with the JPA Agreement by establishing an effective program to manage participating counties' legal and financial risks associated with seismic-related damage to Level V Facilities, including establishing the dollar amount of contributions required of each participating county, and outsourcing any of the AOC's administrative tasks in the best interests of the AOC.
4. Delegate to the Administrative Director of the Courts, or his delegate, the Judicial Council's authority pursuant to section 70324(a)(4) to approve methods to address the seismic issues so that the state does not have a financial burden greater than it would have had if Level V Facilities that are transferred instead had an acceptable seismic rating of Level IV, and to the extent that doing so is in the best interests of the State of California and the Judicial Branch; and to authorize the Administrative Director of the Courts, or his delegate, to perform other acts consistent with, or in furtherance of, the authority conferred by the Judicial Council pursuant to these recommendations 1-4.

Rationale for Recommendations

Recommendation 1

As a result of its deliberations, the Working Group recommends that the ERIA be established for purposes of collecting, accumulating, and pooling funds of participating counties, investing pooled funds, and making disbursements of these funds for the purposes described in this report. AOC staff concurs in the Working Group's recommendation.

If the ERIA is established as recommended by the Working Group, member counties will be better able to manage their financial risks associated with repairing seismic-related damage to Level V Facilities. By pooling funds, the counties can monetize and spread

seismic risks arising out of regional seismic events, and purchase earthquake insurance or reinsurance under coverage terms and conditions that are complementary to any existing earthquake insurance maintained by individual counties.

The ERIA will also have authority to make direct payments to repair seismic-related damage within actuarially determinable levels. Please refer to Attachment 1 for an explanation of the actuarial determinations the Working Group used in developing this recommendation. The ERIA will reduce uncertainty associated with future seismic-related damage and give counties a predictable and stable method of managing that risk. The AOC thinks the opportunity to participate in the ERIA will facilitate transfers to the state of Level V Facilities.

Recommendation 2

The AOC should play a lead role in establishing the ERIA because the ERIA will facilitate the accumulation of assets to meet the financial requirements of section 70324. Proper administration and funding of the ERIA are essential to secure for the Judicial Branch the benefits afforded by section 70324. Conversely, if the ERIA is not established properly, or appropriate approvals are not secured in accordance with applicable law, there is a potential risk that the accumulated funds will not be available to the AOC when needed following a significant seismic event. Furthermore, a properly established JPA will afford the AOC a single point of contact for the payment of claims when there is seismic-related damage to a Level V Facility.

Although administrating the ERIA imposes fiduciary responsibilities on the AOC, the AOC staff will minimize risk associated with these responsibilities by administering the ERIA prudently in accordance with industry standards. OCCM's risk managers will monitor risk and recommend purchasing insurance or identify other opportunities to minimize risk from time-to-time.

Recommendation 3

As presently envisioned, the ERIA will be governed by a board comprising representatives of the participating counties, as required by law. But the AOC has a strong interest in ensuring that the ERIA is properly administered, that financial reporting is accurate and timely, and that only well capitalized and responsible insurers underwrite the risks of damage to Level V Facilities. Therefore, the AOC asks the Judicial Council to authorize the AOC, or a nonprofit public benefit corporation established by the AOC as permitted by law, to serve as the initial administrator of the ERIA and to continue to serve as administrator if in the best interests of the State of California and the Judicial Branch.

Recommendation 4

Changes in the financial and insurance markets, and political considerations, sometimes require decisive action by administrators to changing conditions. In the context of the

ERIA, an appropriate response may include changing insurance carriers, revising coverage agreements, making claims, or even filing lawsuits to secure the benefits afforded by insurance. Also, counties may wish to join or withdraw from the ERIA or change the parameters of the insurance programs in which they participate.² Therefore, the AOC, as the staff agency to the Judicial Council, is the entity best suited to make decisions regarding the AOC's ongoing participation in, and administration of, the ERIA.

Alternative Actions Considered

The SB 10 Seismic Working Group considered each of the following alternative actions:

1. Establishing a fund where each participating county would be required to fund 100% of the forecast seismic-related damage, such that the AOC could use the funds to correct structural deficiencies by upgrading Level V Facilities to a Level IV seismic rating, as well as to pay for seismic-related damage that might occur in the interim. This alternative was rejected as being too costly and, perhaps, not providing enough flexibility to effectively allocate funds based on relative priorities.
2. Establishing a protocol for transferring to the state various interests in county assets that compensate the state for the increased risk of seismic-related damage to Level V Facilities. This alternative was rejected due to the disparate financial situations of the counties and the possibility that these interests would not be liquid when, or could have depreciated before, the state needs to extract value from them. Still, this alternative shows some promise for consideration in the future on a county-by-county basis.

Comments from Interested Parties

Peer review comments were received from six representative counties, and the suggestions and recommendations of those counties have been included in the development of the ERIA proposal. In addition, the recommended program has been developed in close cooperation with the CSAC Excess Insurance Authority and the California Department of Finance.

Implementation Requirements and Costs

The development of ERIA and the creation of all necessary documents will be performed by AOC staff. The continuation of the Certus Consulting, Inc., contract will be necessary to provide each county with specific cost figures for participation in the ERIA. These consulting costs are projected not to exceed \$75,000. In addition the services of a reinsurance broker may be needed to explore reinsurance options. These consulting costs are projected not to exceed \$25,000. No further consulting costs are projected as either

² In either case, the ERIA must require a withdrawing county to provide substitute assurances, acceptance to the AOC, that the state does not have a financial burden greater than permitted pursuant to Government Code section 70324(a)(4).

the ERIA will be formed and will be responsible for its own administrative costs, or counties will determine that the cost of participation in the ERIA outweighs the benefit, and no further action will be required by the AOC.

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Report

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SUBJECT: Authorization for the AOC to Administer a Joint Powers Authority (JPA)
Formed by Counties to Manage Risk Associated With Seismic-Related
Damage to Seismic Level V Trial Court Facilities
(Action Required)

Issue Statement

Pursuant to Government Code section 70324, counties may transfer, and the state may accept, responsibility for certain trial court facilities with an unacceptable, "Level V Seismic Rating," as defined in section 70301(h).¹ Section 70324 states that counties will remain responsible for 35 years following transfer for seismic-related damage to facilities with a Level V Seismic Rating ("Level V Facilities"), including injury to persons or property.² Although there is no commercial insurance product presently available to insure against all seismic-related damages and injury, some counties have no earthquake insurance whatsoever or are otherwise underinsured.³ Therefore, the AOC and certain interested counties propose to implement a new, statewide, seismic risk management program that will provide counties with an opportunity to manage collectively significant

¹ This statement assumes that legislation is enacted to extend beyond June 30, 2007, the authority of the state and the counties pursuant to Government Code section 70321 to enter into agreements transferring responsibility for court facilities to the state. As of the end of the regular 2007 legislative session on September 14, 2007, such legislation had not been passed.

² The AOC is negotiating transfer agreements for Level V Facilities that include a recitation that requires counties to remain responsible for seismic-related damage and injury for the full 35-year period specified in section 70324, regardless of whether the section is repealed or sunsets before the end of that period. The county's responsibility extends to injury to persons or property. (Govt. Code §70324(a)). But it does not extend to damage or injury attributable to "actions or conditions created by or under the control of the state." "The state does not have a duty to make changes or repairs to improve the seismic condition of the building." (Govt. Code §70324(a)(3))

³ Approximately 50 percent of the Level V Facilities are currently insured for seismic-related damage. Even if insured, the coverage is subject to a large per-seismic-event deductible of five percent, or more, of the insured building's value. The other 50 percent of the Level V Facilities are not insured for seismic-related damage.

seismic risk of physical damage to Level V Facilities. This report seeks your approval for participation by the AOC in the implementation of this program. The program involves forming a joint powers authority (“JPA”) that comprises counties wishing to pool funds to manage this risk. The AOC would administer the JPA without being a member.

Background

The Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002,⁴ as amended (the “Act”), provides authority for the Judicial Council and the counties to enter into negotiated agreements concerning the transfer of responsibility for trial court facilities from the counties to the state. As initially enacted in 2002, the Act established that neither title to, nor responsibility for, Level V Facilities could be transferred to the state unless provision were made in the transfer agreement for correction of the deficient items. Effective January 1, 2007, Senate Bill 10 (“SB 10”)⁵ amended the Act by establishing section 70324, which permits the transfer of Level V Facilities if the county remains responsible for seismic-related damage or injury to the same extent the county would have been liable if responsibility for the Level V Facility had not transferred to the state.

Section 70324 also requires the transferring county, in the event of seismic-related damage, to make repairs or provide the state sufficient funds to make those repairs. Section 70324 further allows a transferring county and the Judicial Council to agree on an alternative method to address seismic risks to Level V Facilities so that the state does not have a financial burden greater than if the facility transferred had a level IV seismic rating.

To determine if an alternative method could be developed, the AOC helped establish a state-county “SB 10 Seismic Issues Working Group” (the “Working Group”), comprising representatives of the executive branch, the AOC, the counties, and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC).⁶ The Working Group, led by Clifford Ham, principal architect in the AOC’s Office of Court Construction and Management (“OCCM”), and David Kronberg, General Services Director, County of Sonoma, developed a proposed alternative method to address the counties’ liability under section 70324.

As further described below, this alternative requires the execution of a JPA Agreement by participating counties, pursuant to Government Code section 6500 *et seq.*, that will serve as the vehicle for participating counties to pool funds to address the financial consequences of seismic-related damage to Level V Facilities. Subject to approval of the recommendations below by the Judicial Council, the JPA, to be known as the Earthquake Recovery Indemnity Authority (ERIA), will do so by providing funds to repair seismic-related damage within actuarially determinable levels and by purchasing earthquake

⁴ (Stats. 2002, ch. 1082)

⁵ (Stats. 2006, ch. 444)

⁶ The list of the members of the State-County SB10 Working Group is attached as Attachment 1

reinsurance that supplements and complements existing, individual earthquake insurance policies maintained by some participating counties.

If, as a result of a single event, the assets of the ERIA, its limits of reinsurance, and the insurance proceeds from other earthquake insurance are not sufficient to provide funds to repair seismic-related damage to Level V Facilities, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93-288 as amended) will be available to provide an orderly and continuing means of federal assistance to state and local governments to repair government buildings and provide funds to continue essential government functions.⁷

Any net assets received by the ERIA over the term of its operation will remain with the ERIA to pay losses, reinsurance premiums, and administrative costs. Interest earnings on the net assets will also accrue to the benefit of the ERIA. Once all Level V Facilities have been either upgraded to a Level IV seismic rating or replaced, or upon termination of the ERIA,⁸ the net assets of the ERIA will be returned to the participating counties in the same ratio as the amount of contributions paid by each participating county relates to the total contributions paid by all of the participating counties.

If this proposal is approved by the Judicial Council, the AOC will have authority to administer the JPA either directly or by establishing a separate, nonprofit corporation as permitted by law. The JPA will be governed by a governing board of participating counties chosen in accordance with the counties' JPA Agreement. The AOC will not be a party to the JPA. The initial term of the ERIA will be for 35 years to coincide with the period during which the counties' remain liable under the Act for seismic-related damage to Level V Facilities. The ERIA will provide that a county must initially become a member of the ERIA prior to January 1, 2010, when section 70324 is automatically repealed pursuant to section 70324(g).

Recommendations

The staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts recommends that the Judicial Council take the following action:

1. Authorize the AOC to take a lead role in establishing a JPA that will comprise some or all of the counties transferring Level V Facilities, for the purpose of establishing a multijurisdictional seismic risk pool and thereby facilitating transfers of Level V Facilities.

⁷ The Stafford Act is administered by FEMA and is designed to provide disaster recovery assistance in excess of insurance proceeds (including proceeds provided by programs such as the ERIA). If financial assistance is excess of insurance proceeds, FEMA will provide assistance to repair damage to a building resulting from a covered event on multiple occasions. However, while FEMA financial assistance can also be provided when no insurance coverage exists, such assistance will only be offered one time to repair damage to a building.

⁸ The ERIA will terminate after 35-years at the same time that counties' liability is extinguished by operation of Government Code section 70324.

2. Authorize the AOC to coordinate with counties that wish to participate in the JPA to (a) develop a governance model, (b) refine the JPA's mission and, (c) document the foregoing in a binding agreement establishing the ERIA as the JPA described in this report.
3. Authorize the AOC, either directly or through a nonprofit corporation established by the AOC, to provide administrative support services to the ERIA in accordance with the JPA Agreement by (a) establishing an effective program to manage participating counties' legal and financial risks associated with seismic-related damage to Level V Facilities, including establishing the dollar amount of contributions required of each participating county; (b) collecting, accumulating and pooling funds in accounts established, managed, and invested in accordance with applicable law, and the JPA Agreement establishing the ERIA; (c) paying and allocating ERIA funds, and taking any further administrative actions, in accordance with applicable law and the JPA Agreement; (d) developing criteria for evaluating the performance of the ERIA; and (e) outsourcing any of the AOC's administrative tasks in the best interests of the AOC.
4. Delegate to the Administrative Director of the Courts, or his delegate, the Judicial Council's authority pursuant to section 70324(a)(4) to approve methods to address the seismic issues so that the state does not have a financial burden greater than it would have had if Level V Facilities that are transferred instead had an acceptable seismic rating of Level IV, and to the extent doing so is in the best interests of the State of California and the Judicial Branch; and to authorize the Administrative Director of the Courts, or his delegate, to perform other acts consistent with, or in furtherance of, the authority conferred by the Judicial Council pursuant to these recommendations 1-4.

Rationale for Recommendation

Recommendation 1

As a result of its deliberations, the Working Group recommends that the ERIA be established for purposes of collecting, accumulating, and pooling funds of participating counties, investing pooled funds, and making disbursements of these funds for the purposes described in this report. AOC staff concurs in the Working Group's recommendation.

If the ERIA is established as recommended by the Working Group, member counties will be better able to manage their financial risks associated with repairing seismic-related damage to Level V Facilities.⁹ By pooling funds, the counties can monetize and spread seismic risks arising out of regional seismic events and purchase earthquake insurance or

⁹ The ERIA will not cover claims or liability for personal injury.

reinsurance under coverage terms and conditions that are complementary to any existing earthquake insurance maintained by individual counties.

The ERIA will also have authority to make direct payments to repair seismic-related damage within actuarially determinable levels. Please refer to Attachment 1 for an explanation of the actuarial determinations the Working Group used in developing this recommendation. The ERIA will reduce uncertainty associated with future seismic-related damage and give counties a predictable and stable method of managing that risk. The AOC thinks the opportunity to participate in the ERIA will facilitate transfers to the state of Level V Facilities.

Recommendation 2

The AOC should play a lead role in establishing the ERIA because the ERIA will facilitate the accumulation of assets to meet the financial requirements of section 70324. Proper administration and funding of the ERIA are essential to secure for the Judicial Branch the benefits afforded by section 70324. Conversely, if the ERIA is not established properly, or appropriate approvals are not secured in accordance with applicable law, there is a potential risk that the accumulated funds will not be available to the AOC when needed following a significant seismic event. Furthermore, a properly established JPA will afford the AOC a single point of contact for the payment of claims when there is seismic-related damage to a Level V Facility.

Although administering the ERIA imposes fiduciary responsibilities on the AOC, the AOC staff will minimize risk associated with these responsibilities by administering the ERIA prudently in accordance with industry standards. OCCM's risk managers will monitor risk and recommend purchasing insurance or identify other opportunities to minimize risk from time-to-time.

Recommendation 3

As presently envisioned, the ERIA will be governed by a board comprising representatives of the participating counties, as required by law. But the AOC has a strong interest in ensuring that the ERIA is properly administered, that financial reporting is accurate and timely, and that only well capitalized and responsible insurers underwrite the risks of damage to Level V Facilities. Therefore, the AOC asks the Judicial Council to authorize the AOC, or a nonprofit public benefit corporation established by the AOC as permitted by law, to serve as the initial administrator of the ERIA and to continue to serve as administrator if in the best interests of the State of California and the Judicial Branch.

Recommendation 4

Changes in the financial and insurance markets, and political considerations, sometimes require decisive action by administrators to changing conditions. In the context of the ERIA, an appropriate response may include changing insurance or reinsurance

companies, revising coverage agreements, making claims, or even filing lawsuits to secure the benefits afforded by insurance. Also, counties may wish to join or withdraw from the ERIA or change the parameters of the insurance programs in which they participate.¹⁰ Therefore, the AOC, as the staff agency to the Judicial Council, is the entity best suited to make decisions regarding the AOC's ongoing participation in, and administration of, the ERIA.

Alternative Actions Considered

The Working Group considered each of the following alternative actions:

1. Establishing a fund where each participating county would be required to fund 100% of the forecast seismic-related damage, such that the AOC could use the funds to correct structural deficiencies by upgrading Level V Facilities to a Level IV seismic rating, as well as to pay for seismic-related damage that might occur in the interim. This alternative was rejected as being too costly, and, perhaps, not providing enough flexibility to effectively allocate funds based on relative priorities.
2. Establishing a protocol for transferring to the state various interests in county assets that compensate the state for the increased risk of seismic-related damage to Level V Facilities. This alternative was rejected due to the disparate financial situations of the counties and the possibility that these interests would not be liquid when, or could have depreciated before, the state needs to extract value from them. Still, this alternative shows some promise for consideration in the future on a county-by-county basis.

Comments from Interested Parties

Peer review comments were received from six representative counties, and the suggestions and recommendations of those counties have been included in the development of the ERIA proposal. In addition, the recommended program has been developed in close cooperation with the CSAC Excess Insurance Authority and the California Department of Finance.

Implementation Requirements and Costs

The development of the ERIA and the creation of all necessary documents will be performed by AOC staff. The continuation of the Certus Consulting, Inc., contract will be necessary to provide each county with specific cost figures for participation in the ERIA. These consulting costs are projected not to exceed \$75,000. In addition the services of a reinsurance broker may be needed to explore reinsurance options. These consulting costs are projected not to exceed \$25,000. No further consulting costs are projected as either

¹⁰ In either case, the ERIA must require a withdrawing county to provide substitute assurances, acceptance to the AOC, that the state does not have a financial burden greater than permitted pursuant to Government Code section 70324 (a) (4).

the ERIA will be formed and will be responsible for its own administrative costs, or counties will determine that the cost of participation in the ERIA outweighs the benefit, and no further action will be required of the AOC.

Attachments

- Actuarial Determinations
- SB 10 Seismic Issues Working Group

ATTACHMENT 1

ACTUARIAL DETERMINATIONS

To address the seismic issue so that the state does not have a financial burden greater than it would have had if Level V Facilities initially transferred were court facilities in buildings rated as a Level IV seismic rating, the AOC engaged the services of Certus Consulting, Inc., to work with the AOC staff to model and forecast levels of damage that may arise from seismic events. The model indicated that, if all Level V Facilities, were covered in the ERIA, and there were no other earthquake insurance, over the term of 35 years there could be \$765 million in seismic-related damage to the Level V Facilities buildings.

This forecast is at a 75 percent confidence level, which means that there will be adequate funds to repair seismic-related damage in 75 percent of all possible outcomes. The Working Group determined that this level provides the necessary protection to the state to allow a building to transfer with the seismic risk profile of a similar building rated seismic Level IV, based on a model forecast that (1) each seismic event over the last 100 years would be fully insured with the exception of five events, (2) Level IV facilities expose the state to a certain level of seismic-related damage, and (3) federal disaster assistance would be available for events resulting in damage if in excess of the ability of the ERIA to pay 100 percent of the seismic-related damage.

The model then had to be adjusted to make allowance for credits to be applied if a Level V Facility were insured for seismic-related damage and to account for damage to the entire building and not just the court-occupied space. It is necessary to have funds available to pay for damage to the entire building in which a court is an occupant, not just the court-occupied space, because of the indiscriminate nature of seismic-related damage and its effect on the structural components of buildings.

Over the thirty-five (35) year duration of the program, the forecast expected losses were:

- \$18 million to provide for the administration of the ERIA, including all costs for financial modeling and actuarial services, claims management, reinsurance acquisition, and financial reporting;
- \$185 million to provide funds to pay for damage that would otherwise fall within the deductible applicable to other earthquake insurance;
- \$361 million of potential damage that could be insured by other earthquake insurance;¹¹

¹¹ The proposed means of funding the ERIA would be to calculate a contribution paid by each county for each Level V Facility covered by the ERIA, and then to reduce the contribution based on whether the Level V Facility is otherwise insured for seismic damage and, if so, to what amount. The \$295 million is the expected credit for other

- \$161 million to provide funds for the extra expense necessary to continue court operations in the event of seismic-related damage and to provide funds to restore damaged Level V Facilities to a Level IV seismic rating; and
- \$40 million to provide funds to make repairs to damaged Level V Facilities in excess of the funds available from other earthquake insurance.

The model forecast the total number of seismic events over the 35-year period and the expected loss from each of these events. As a result it determined that the ERIA will need to establish initial contributions of approximately \$50 million. This may require each participating county to initially make a lump sum contribution covering the first three-to-five years of the program. From that point forward the contributions would be paid annually unless there was a need for an assessment to pay for unexpected losses. Annual contributions would be charged to participating counties for 35 years, or until the county makes the necessary upgrades to a court facility to establish a Level IV or better seismic rating, or until the Level V Facility is replaced by a state capital project.

earthquake insurance if all Level V Facilities were insured for seismic-related damage in addition to being covered by the ERIA.

ATTACHMENT 2

SB 10 SEISMIC ISSUES WORKING GROUP

Members

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