AGN. NO._____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER AUGUST 4, 2026

ENSURING EARTHQUAKE EMERGENCY READINESS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Los Angeles County has not experienced a large-scale, damaging earthquake since the magnitude 6.7 Northridge earthquake of 1994, which killed approximately 60 individuals, injured more than 9,000 individuals and left 20,000 residents homeless. It also caused between $20 to $40 billion in property damage (equivalent to $80 billion today) and an additional $40 billion in broader economic loss.

As recently reported in the *Los Angeles Times,* the extended quiet period of the San Andreas fault has not reduced risk but concentrated it. Tectonic strain on key segments of the San Andreas and San Jacinto faults near the Cajon Pass, roughly 50 miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles, is now calculated to be at its highest level in at least 1,000 years. Accumulated earthquake energy does not dissipate on its own, it is released only through large earthquakes.

The area of greatest concern is the Cajon Pass itself, where the San Andreas and San Jacinto faults intersect. Historical stress modeling shows that strain has repeatedly accumulated at this junction, causing major earthquakes such as the 1812 Wrightwood earthquake and the 1857 Fort Tejon rupture. The current buildup, researchers found, has already surpassed the stress levels recorded just before significant historical earthquakes on both faults. The Antelope Valley and San Gabriel Mountains corridor, including the communities of Santa Clarita and Lancaster, lie directly along this stretch of the fault system.

The scale of risk this represents is significant. A 2008 U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) scenario modeled a hypothetical magnitude 7.8 rupture on the southern San Andreas and found it would produce violent shaking simultaneously across Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura and Imperial counties, with an estimated 1,800 deaths.

A disaster of that scale, striking multiple counties at once, would prevent the concentrated regional response the County relied on after Northridge earthquake in

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1994. A 2015 USGS forecast further estimated a 60% likelihood of a magnitude 6.7 or greater earthquake striking the Los Angeles region by 2045, with roughly a 1-in-5 chance of that earthquake occurring specifically on the San Andreas fault within Los Angeles County.

These findings are not a prediction that a major earthquake is imminent. However, the finding that these fault systems are now more heavily loaded than at any point in the historical record warrants serious attention. The County has an obligation to ensure its residents, infrastructure and emergency systems are prepared for a disaster of this scale before it occurs.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors suspend Section 22.1 of the Rules of the Board for the limited purpose of considering this motion.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors request that the Office of Emergency Management provide a verbal presentation to the Board at the September 29th meeting regarding the County's own earthquake preparedness efforts, including the current readiness of County staff and facilities; any existing gaps that must be addressed; and a plan for how the County will ensure continued service to residents and businesses, while ensuring community safety and infrastructure needs in the event of a major earthquake. The presentation should include Public Works, Fire, Sheriff, CEO Asset Management Branch and all relevant County Departments that have a role in emergency preparedness and response; and engage key stakeholders such as Dr. Lucy Jones and representatives from academic institutions such as Caltech and UCLA.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Office of Emergency Management, in collaboration with the Chief Executive Office Countywide Communications, to develop and implement an Emergency Earthquake Readiness public awareness program that includes the following:

- An online "Know Your Risk" portal leveraging available resources through the California Office of Emergency Services and other partners to provide accessible preparedness tools, resources and information to help residents, businesses, schools and community-based organizations prepare for a potential earthquake.
- A multilingual public education and outreach campaign leading up to and surrounding the upcoming "Great ShakeOut Day" on October 15, utilizing traditional media, digital platforms, social media, county facilities, transit partners and community organizations to support Emergency Earthquake Preparedness.
- Recommendations for sustained, year-round public engagement strategies that move beyond annual preparedness events and establish earthquake readiness as an ongoing public safety priority for Los Angeles County.

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KB:scem