



# EARTHQUAKE ENGINEERING RESEARCH INSTITUTE'S REGIONAL CHAPTER CITIZEN ADVOCATE TOOLKIT

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### Resource Quick Links:

EERI Citizen Advocate Toolkit: <https://www.eeri.org/advocacy-and-public-policy/citizen-advocate-toolkit/>  
State Quick Sheets: <https://www.eeri.org/advocacy-and-public-policy/citizen-advocate-toolkit/>  
Legislative Action Center: <https://www.eeri.org/advocacy-and-public-policy/legislative-action-center/>  
EERI Public Policy Statements: <https://www.eeri.org/advocacy-and-public-policy/public-policy-what-is-eeri-currently-doing/>



## **REGIONAL CHAPTER EERI CITIZEN ADVOCATE GUIDELINES**

### **1. OVERVIEW**

These guidelines are for EERI Regional Chapters to support seismic safety advocacy in their state, region, and cities. The guidelines include protocols, suggestions, and examples for Regional Chapters to self-organize for advocacy within the parameters of [EERI's mission statement and vision](#). This is a companion guide to the [EERI Citizen Advocate Toolkit](#) written by EERI's Public Policy and Advocacy Committee (PPA) in 2020 which focuses on seismic safety advocacy by individual EERI members, and is also relevant to the topics discussed in this document.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

#### ***EERI'S ROLE***

Public policy advocacy through EERI for seismic safety can help policymakers understand complex scientific issues and provide an informed review of current or long-standing seismic safety issues. Professional associations like EERI help policymakers by vetting, filtering, and synthesizing what can otherwise be complicated topics as a convening body for subject matter experts and stakeholders.

#### ***TYPES OF ADVOCACY***

Research has shown that professional organizations like EERI advocating for certain agendas typically fall into two categories: *Policy for Earthquake Engineering and Science* and *Earthquake Engineering and Science for Policy*.

*Policy for Earthquake Engineering and Science* advocates on behalf of earthquake engineering professionals' interests and can range from supporting robust budgets for science research funding to promoting professional development agendas in governance to influence seismic safety.

*Earthquake Engineering and Science for Policy* seeks to inform policymakers about the relevant science on issues they are considering and relates more to the technical perspectives on understanding earthquake risk, measures for seismic safety, increasing disaster risk reduction, and creating resilient communities, etc.

Regardless of the type of advocacy, the goal is to ensure policymakers know the best available science to make the most informed decisions. This type of organized advocacy requires members to learn the language and needs of policymakers to have an impactful role in policymaking. An essential component of policy-related science advocacy is explaining engineering, science, and the scientific and technical process when speaking with policymakers and general audiences. Working through an EERI Regional Chapter or Subcommittee can afford consensus driven seismic safety and disaster risk reduction advocacy, whether it be guidance for policymakers, influencing local initiatives, explanation of technical dynamics, proposing legislation, support for testifying before Congress, introductions to policymakers, or creating coalitions with other likeminded organizations. EERI's Regional Chapters can be a space for such conversations on advancing seismic safety and provide an organized platform to speak publicly about seismic safety policy.



### **TYPES OF ORGANIZING**

EERI's state-based membership may vary in regional organization for legislative advocacy. For example, organizational structures may include:

- EERI Regional Chapter
  - Board members leading advocacy with regional members. One or many chapters may exist.
- EERI Student Chapters
  - University Professor liaison leading advocacy with students. One or many Student Chapters may exist.
- EERI Legislative Subcommittee or Policy Working Group
  - Committee formed as part of Regional Chapters leading advocacy for region and/or state
- Ad-hoc Groups of members based on particular, time-sensitive advocacy needs
  - Members focused on specific legislation at state, region, or local level when Regional Chapter and/or Legislative Subcommittee do not exist.

It is advised that advocacy for state-based legislation invite all state members, which may not be necessary for local or city-specific measures that could be discussed in a Regional Chapter or an ad-hoc manner. If Regional Chapters have formed regional or state-focused committees, other Regional Chapters should be invited to discussions as often as possible. It is recommended that given legislative activity, interest, and member capacity, a state-based Legislative Subcommittee be formed for state-level legislation. Student chapters should similarly involve as many EERI Student Chapters to discussions on legislative matters in the region and/or state. As often as possible, Ad-hoc Groups should share actions with Regional Chapters and/or the PPA. It is also the case that a Regional Chapter may be the only EERI chapter in an entire state. In these cases, a membership roster should be obtained through [EERI's Membership Portal](#) to invite and include as many members in the State to discussions on Regional Chapter and state legislative matters. See [Regional Resources and Logistics](#) for more details.

### **WHAT IS LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY?**

In its simplest terms, legislative advocacy is working with individual lawmakers and lawmaking bodies to gain support for a cause or initiative, for the needs of a specific population, for an organization or group of organizations, or for specific services.

EERI's involvement in public policy stems from its mission statement: to reduce earthquake risk in part by advocating comprehensive and realistic measures for reducing the harmful effects of earthquakes. One way EERI fulfills this role is by forging consensus and speaking with a common voice to public forums and legislative bodies on behalf of the diverse risk management community. In order to successfully affect public policy, EERI needs active participation from its members to help (1) identify and study important earthquake-related problems, (2) evaluate potential solutions to determine the most appropriate one(s), and (3) support policymakers in advocating and implementing the chosen solution(s). The resulting policies have the power to not only shape our communities and improve our quality of living, but also influence the very future of our profession.

### 3. EERI REGIONAL CHAPTER ADVOCACY STEPS

The below suggest steps that a Regional Chapter and/or Legislative Subcommittee can consider when beginning seismic safety advocacy in their respective state or region.



**Establishing Legislative Priorities.** It is important to determine the near-term and long-term goals the regional members have for seismic safety, earthquake risk reduction, and resilient communities. This requires research on past legislation, key players, and current engineering and scientific knowledge that could advance and/or accelerate actions for seismic safety advocacy in the region. You can visit [EERI’s Legislative Action Center](#) for information on recent and past seismic safety legislation that EERI has tracked in the past several years.

**Convene Regional Members.** Establishing member interest, capacity, availability, and leadership to undertake seismic safety advocacy actions is essential for successful continuity of near- and long-term goals.

**Tracking and Writing Legislation.** This can include researching and tracking bills, opposing or supporting existing bills, providing amendments where appropriate, and proposing new legislation. Offering amendments and suggestions to bill language requires contact and relationship building with policymakers. See [Legislative Proposals](#).

**Building Rapport.** In order that the Regional Chapter and/or Subcommittee effectively advocate for seismic safety, it is imperative to build relationships with policymakers and their staff. In addition, creating rapport with relevant government agencies allows EERI Regional Chapters and their members to be able to communicate and share technical and scientific knowledge where appropriate and necessary through pre-defined channels (email, call, in-

**State Quick Sheets** provide information on session timelines, seismic history, and key dates of the legislature. The State Quick Sheets can be found here: <https://www.eeri.org/advocacy-and-public-policy/citizen-advocate-toolkit/>

**EERI’s Legislative Action Center (LAC)** keeps members, partners and allies updated on seismic safety legislation. The LAC can be found here: <https://www.eeri.org/advocacy-and-public-policy/legislative-action-center/>



person, or virtual visits). Elected officials, influential persons, and department representatives to build relationships with can include: state and federal representatives, mayors, city council members, resilience/earthquake managers, sustainability/climate change managers, housing authorities, building departments, etc.

**Speak with a Unified Voice.** Not only is it important to develop relationships with policymakers and representatives, it is also critical that ongoing discussions with like-minded organizations are occurring concurrently to tracking bills, taking action on legislation, proposing bills, and providing language to bills. When policymakers see that the technical community has differing views that are not addressed in a clear manner, it confuses the process, and can oftentimes render a bill unsuccessful. Members should learn which stakeholders and proponents may be good allies for seismic safety. In addition, determining opponents to seismic safety policies and risk reduction strategies is also important to consider during advocacy.

**Follow-up.** During and after the legislative and implementation processes, continue to follow-up with representatives and their staff. Be mindful of legislative deadlines when outreaching so that opportunities to influence or propose bills are not missed.

**Continue Building Relationships.** After the legislative session, continue building relationships with like-minded professional organizations, academic groups, and relevant regional and state agencies focused on seismic safety.

**Send Policymakers a Note of Appreciation.** This is always a good practice with any interaction EERI members have with policymakers and representatives. It is especially important after the legislative session when staff begins to prepare for the next cycle of bills to be introduced and where EERI members can have influence on seismic safety legislation via new bills or re-introduction of revised bills. When a legislator is on her/his last term, it is wise to ask who might pick up bills that were not successful in past sessions, and which other representatives or policymakers may be key allies and proponents of earthquake safety.

At the end of the legislative cycle, be sure to celebrate the accomplishments of the Chapter and/or Subcommittee. Share these with fellow members in the Public Policy and Advocacy committee during a meeting, and consider showcasing efforts in an EERI Pulse news blast. State and regional members can highlight advocacy efforts by a particular member as part of an EERI news blast as well. Contact EERI staff and the Public Policy and Advocacy Committee if interested in the above. In addition, consider debriefing with members after a particular bill's outcome is reached, or a legislative session has ended. See [Debriefing](#).

Citizen Advocate Toolkit includes information on how to find representatives and engaging with elected officials. The Toolkit can be found in the link here:

<https://www.eeri.org/advocacy-and-public-policy/citizen-advocate-toolkit/>

#### Communicating and Taking Action

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Communication Toolkit provides guidance and tips to improve communication skills with elected officials and the general public. A link to the AAAS Communication Toolkit can be found here:

<https://www.aaas.org/resources/take-action-toolkit>

### **ACTIVITIES FOR ADVOCACY**

EERI regional members can consider the following advocacy activities during and outside of state legislative sessions. **Note that given the current context of COVID-19, all suggestions for meeting in-person for any advocacy activities should resume only when state and local officials deem it safe to do so.**

- **Host a webinar/chapter meeting.** This could be a good starting point for Chapters and Subcommittees to begin seismic safety advocacy. Webinars could be organized as:
  - Informational or introductory for members;
  - A workshop for developing strategies or focusing on a specific seismic safety topic, for example;
  - Invited presentation by policymaker (likely legislative staff), or someone familiar with the history of the state and/or region's seismic safety policies.
- **Meet with or call a legislative aid or director, or if possible, the elected official.** The call should include EERI representative members hosting a call, with other representatives of related organizations, but should be limited to 2-3 people on call or meeting in-person when it is safe to do so. Remember, during the legislative cycle representatives are looking for bill ideas. Refer to the [State Quick Sheets](#) and your state's legislative calendar to strategize bill proposals and ideation with elected representatives. The [Citizen Advocate Toolkit](#) also includes communication guidance.
- **Select an EERI Policy Statement for contextualizing to the region/city.** Reviewing [EERI Policy Position Statements and White Papers](#) to developing a statement of Action and Implementation germane to the state, region, or city. See [Statement of Action and Implementation](#).
- **Develop legislation proposals.** See [Legislative Proposals](#) in the Appendix.
- **Develop or update State Quick Sheet with PPA Committee** if one does not exist already.
- **Create an advocacy week, advocacy plan, and/or Advocacy Day with members.** This type of activity can include members meeting at town halls, 1-1 or mass visits with representatives, letterwriting campaign, members meeting representatives during (virtual) state Capitol visits, members meeting with local/city authorities like mayor or council member to advance seismic safety. Email [policy@eeri.org](mailto:policy@eeri.org) for the EERI Advocacy Day Action Plan (December 2020).
- **Conduct policy-relevant research on seismic consequences in your area or region.** The effort by the [San Diego chapter](#) on scenario-earthquake consequences can apprise representatives and communities of the imminent threat and often overwhelming consequences of earthquakes in a region or state.
- **Interact with existing legislative Subcommittees.** Chapters initiating seismic safety policy advocacy agendas are welcome to join existing Subcommittee meetings for insight on advocacy processes. For example, the California Legislative Subcommittee meets bi-weekly during the legislative session.
- **Develop a list of legislative priorities for the Regional Chapter or sub-committee for the subsequent legislative cycle.** See the [EERI State Quick Sheets](#) and [EERI Legislative Action Center](#) for information on state seismicity and legislation that EERI members have tracked over the past several years.
- **Build coalitions with local and like-minded organizations.** In order to speak with a unified voice, members should contact advocacy representatives in other synergistic professional or research organizations. These can include the AIA, SEAOC, USRC, ICBO, USGBC, ICC, research centers, etc.

## **AREAS OF ADVOCACY AND INFLUENCE**

Examples of legislative and implementation areas of advocacy and influence by EERI state- or regional-members can include, but are not limited to:

- **A bill with funding attached.**
  - Members may want to advocate for state and regional legislators to sponsor a bill.
- **A bill that supports a particular philosophy or helps to legitimize a seismic safety issue.**
  - Such a bill might affirm the responsibility of government to deal with a particular problem or provide a particular service. Ideas such as disaster risk reduction, disaster prepared and resilient communities are values that are in line with EERI's mission that could be supported.
- **A bill with regulations that benefit the target population or advance a seismic safety cause.**
  - For example, community members living in the most vulnerable building types.
- **A local ordinance that supports a seismic safety cause.**
  - For example, soft-story multi-family residence retrofit ordinance.
- **Budget advocacy.**
  - State and local governments approve budgets each year. Groups often advocate putting new or more money in the budget for their issue or to get proposed funding levels approved by the whole legislative body and signed into law or reverse proposed cuts in funding.
- **Simple political, intellectual, or moral support.**
  - This might be the support of lawmakers, like Congresspeople or state legislators, or individuals and agencies that do not make laws but have influence on them. For example, a Governor of a state cannot make laws, but can propose and veto bills, push for specific policies, and set policy through the ways laws are implemented and enforced by her/his office.
- **Links to other contacts.**
  - Through networking, lawmakers and other government officials can introduce you to other legislators or people who can be more directly helpful than they themselves can.

Adapted from: University of Kansas. 2020. *Community Toolbox: Section 10. General Rules for Organizing for Legislative Advocacy* Available at < <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/advocacy/direct-action/legislative-advocacy/main> >

## **TIPS FOR ENGAGING WITH POLICYMAKERS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS**

The following are tips and best practices for engaging with policymakers, elected offices, legislative staff, or other influential persons that can support seismic safety in your state or region. Peruse the [EERI Citizen Advocate Toolkit](#) for more information on preparing for meetings with policymakers and developing content for conversations.

- **Approach policy makers personally.**
  - Establish relationships as the Regional Chapter leader, member, or Subcommittee Chair.
  - Make it personal: Tell your story and be a reference for them for all aspects seismic risk reduction and seismic safety related.
  - Try to build relationships with representatives, their legislative aids, and members of agencies charged with implementing relevant policies.

- **Approach policymakers with a clear goal in mind.**
  - Your goals should be clear, specific, and involve actions a lawmaker can actually try to accomplish. Clear goals are easier to understand for those you are trying to convince and those working with you. It is good to come prepared with solutions:
    - An already drafted piece of legislation or ordinance;
    - A list of items you would like included in legislation;
    - A specific sum of money you want appropriated in a particular budget item or bill (be sure you know the line-item number of bill number);
    - A letter you would like the legislator to sign on to, a bill to co-sponsor, or an initiative to endorse.
- **Approach policymakers with the consequences of their actions.**
  - This should be brought up in a subtle manner. Letting legislators know the extent of the problem and the number of people affected in their districts, or currently being services is one way to address the issue.
- **Communication.**
  - Communicate science-based solutions using the “problem-solution-ask” approach recommended by professional lobbyists: summarize the key elements of the problem to be addressed, present a reasonable solution that clearly resolves the problem, and ask for specific actions to carry out the solution.
- **Be OK to take the long view.**
  - Since many policy makers think from one election to the next, you can give them the chance to do something they can take credit for when they next run for office. They will be far more liable and try to make it happen.
- **Professionalism.** There exists a professional obligation to be transparent in your motivations, whether as a technical expert or as a constituent, or both. The Chapters’ and Subcommittees’ goal is to bring the best available science into decision making no matter what the issue, to separate professional opinion from accepted knowledge or fact, and to be objective, complete, and truthful in presenting information.

Adapted from: University of Kansas. 2020. *Community Toolbox: Section 10. General Rules for Organizing for Legislative Advocacy*. Available at < <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/advocacy/direct-action/legislative-advocacy/main> > and

Cockrell et al., 2018. *Embracing Advocacy in Science*. University of South Florida. Available at < <https://www.marine.usf.edu/documents/marcy-cockrell-advocacy-2018.pdf> >

### **DEBRIEFING AFTER ADVOCACY ACTIVITY**

Use the questions below as a conversation starter among EERI members to learn from the legislative session, visit or conversation with representatives or their staff, and other advocacy activities, to decide what to do next. If members visited as a group (or had a virtual meeting), go to a place where you can sit together and talk or continue the conversation right after meeting with the policymaker while everything is fresh. Here are some ideas of debrief questions:



Quick Impressions:

- Each person takes a turn filling in the sentence, “I feel \_\_\_\_\_ about the meeting because \_\_\_\_\_.”  
If some people dominate, say, “You’re saying important things, but let’s hear from everyone quickly.”
- What went well?
  - Make a list together.
- How did the legislator or staff person respond to the group?
  - Non-committal, bored, interested, hostile, encouraging, defensive, uncomfortable, etc.?  
What was her/his body language? Words? Tone of voice? Length of meeting?
- What did you learn about the legislator?
  - Any insights into their feelings about your issues, feelings about you as constituents, reliance on staff for information, or methods for handling meetings with constituents? (If you met with staff, did she/he give you insights about the legislator? Did staff tell you about the legislator’s views or voting behavior?
- What should the next step be?
  - Amendments? Coordinating with allies and stakeholders? Letters? Media? Another in-person or virtual visit?
- Who will send a follow-up letter and/or email to the legislator or staff to thank them for the meeting and restate key points?

Adapted from: Steichenv, L. and Patterson, J., 2018. In the Eye of the Storm: A People’s Guide to Transforming Crisis & Advancing Equity in the Disaster Continuum.

## **4. ORGANIZATION, LOGISTICS, AND PROCEDURES**

This section provides information for Regional Chapter and Subcommittees on seismic safety public policy advocacy organizational tools, logistics, and procedures.

### **ORGANIZATION**

As described in the [Procedural Rules](#), EERI legislative Subcommittees must update the Board of Directors, Regional Chapters, and Public Policy and Advocacy Committee when taking positions on particular legislation. This would be the same process for regional and Student Chapters. Ad-hoc Group members focused on specific and time-sensitive legislation must inform the Public Policy and Advocacy committee similar to the Legislative Subcommittees. Ad-hoc groups of members should include [policy@eeri.org](mailto:policy@eeri.org) in any communication regarding legislation that members would like to take action on. Escalating actions and review by the Board will happen on a case-by-case basis for Ad-hoc Groups wishing to take a formal EERI position on a particular state or regional legislation (assuming there is no Legislative Subcommittee or Regional Chapter). Inasmuch as possible, legislative activity should be shared by members, Ad-hoc Groups, and Student Chapters with the Regional Chapter when a Legislative Subcommittee does not exist.

### **REGIONAL RESOURCES AND LOGISTICS**

#### **Background Information**

[State Quick Sheets](#) exist for five states at the time of the development of this Guideline. In the future, additional Quick Sheets will be developed as state- and regional-interest in seismic safety advocacy grows. Regional Chapter leaders should peruse EERI's Membership Directory for members that may be interested in forming a Legislative Subcommittee or who may be subject matter experts on a particular earthquake risk reduction topic.

#### **File Management and Organization**

EERI Staff can support Regional Chapters and state-based advocacy for members by creating a Public Policy Google Drive file management system that can be a platform for file storage, collaborative document development, and sharing of resources. This will be done as requested and needed by a Regional Chapter or State Legislative Subcommittee. Members of the Legislative Subcommittee or Regional Chapter leaders engaging in legislative activity will be given access to documents by EERI staff that can only be edited and altered by those members (notes, bill language editing, etc.). Legislative Subcommittees will also be given a specific email address by which to communicate with Subcommittee members, also using Google groups.

#### **Communication and Continuity**

For the five states that have State Quick Sheets (Alaska, California, Oregon, Utah, and Washington State) a *Legislative Tracking and Archiving* template along with a *State Subcommittee Instruction* document will be created that can be posted on the Legislative Action Center to be viewable by members and visitors to EERI's website. Any communication that is internal will remain in the Subcommittee's Google Drive accessible only by specific members through their EERI Membership email address used when becoming an EERI Member. Depending on how many people are involved and the context in which a blast is required, a list serve can be made for all State or Regional members that may or may not be



active members of the Regional Chapter or the Subcommittee. This is helpful when swift response and action is needed for specific legislation, especially at the State level, and member voices must be submitted en masse to the Governor or State representative.

It is important that documents are managed and archived appropriately by Chapter or Subcommittee leaders for continuity of public policy and advocacy over years, and for EERI staff and Public Policy and Advocacy Committee Chairs to easily navigate current and historic documents. As part of the file management structure, documents such as the [Statement of Action and Implementation](#), any legislation currently being tracked or bills on which Chapters and Subcommittees are taking action should be included in the Google Drive. In addition, Chapter leaders like Board Members or Subcommittee Co-Chairs should ensure that a discussion on continuity to the next Co-chair is scheduled when members are transitioning after their leadership term ends.

### **PROCEDURAL RULES**

The below procedural rules were drafted by the Public Policy and Advocacy Committee, EERI Staff, California Legislative Subcommittee, and approved by the Board in February 2020. The objective of the procedural rules is to provide guidance on committee structuring, advocacy, and interaction with EERI's Public Policy and Advocacy Committee and Board of Directors.

#### **Public Policy and Advocacy Committee Procedural Rules for Legislative Subcommittees February 7, 2020**

##### **Subcommittee Purpose & Charge**

Legislative Subcommittees (Subcommittees) are Subcommittees of the Public Policy and Advocacy Committee (PPA) assigned to address legislative activities within a specific jurisdiction or region. Subcommittees shall work with and directly advise the EERI Board of Directors (Board) on matters regarding the analyses, reviews, and recommendations pertaining to State and/or Local Legislation as it relates to EERI's mission, vision, and role. These Subcommittees are central to EERI's efforts to 'forge a consensus and speak with a common voice to public forums and legislative bodies on behalf of the diverse risk management community,' a critical aspect for achieving EERI's stated vision and role.

##### **Subcommittee Structure and Membership**

Subcommittees are advisory bodies operating within the broader PPA Committee. Subcommittees are managed by a Chair, or Co-Chairs, who are appointed by the PPA Chairs and approved by the Board. The PPA relies on the Subcommittee Chair(s) to exercise sufficient judgment to make recommendations directly to the Board. Subcommittee membership is on a voluntary basis, open to all EERI members that wish to participate in Subcommittee meetings. Participating Subcommittee membership may vary from one meeting to the next depending on the subject matter under consideration. All Subcommittee members present at the meeting may offer comments and vote on various matters. Actions considered and recommended by the Subcommittee, along with supporting materials, will be sent to the Board (via the EERI Executive Director) by the Subcommittee Chair(s) for modification, adoption, or rejection.

### **Subcommittee Meetings**

Subcommittees are encouraged to meet monthly, via conference call, and face-to-face at the Annual meeting. Meetings may also be needed more frequently or on an ad hoc basis to accommodate State and/or Local legislative deadlines.

### **Reviewing Legislation**

Subcommittee Chair(s), Subcommittee members, the PPA, or the Board may identify relevant pending legislation for consideration by the Subcommittee. Timelines and schedules for Subcommittee activities will be aligned with the legislative calendars for the appropriate state or local jurisdiction. Subcommittees should recognize that legislation can develop quickly and a nimble response will be required. The Chair(s) will make every effort to provide the Subcommittee adequate time to make deliberative recommendations; however, the process for reviewing legislation may need to be compressed or modified at the discretion of the Chair(s), depending on external deadlines. Following an explanation of a Legislative Bill's intent and its relevance to EERI's policies, an open conversation and bill analysis with recommendations will be solicited from all meeting participants. A Subcommittee's participating members will use the best available resources to become informed about a bill's purpose, intent, and its effects. A Subcommittee's Chair(s) may assign specific tasks of bill analysis and/or position drafting to members who will report back to the Subcommittee within an agreed upon and specified period of time. Research resources may include but are not limited to speaking with other subject matter experts, legislative sponsors and their staff, affected agency staff, and Regional Chapter members; reviewing policy analyses; and considerations with any existing [EERI position statements](#), as applicable. As necessary or applicable, Subcommittee Chair(s) may collaborate with other professional organizations, but will not be bound by other organizations' stated positions.

### **Drafting Legislation**

Subcommittees may wish to propose legislation to local or state legislators. Legislation may be proposed at the initiative of Subcommittee members, in line with [EERI position statements](#), or at the request of the EERI Board and/or PPA. A legislative proposal will first be reviewed by the PPA and/or Board before being presented to a legislative author. If a legislator agrees to take up the proposal, the Subcommittee may draft language and/or review draft language. The Subcommittee should work closely with legislative staff to review and amend language, as described in the section above. As Subcommittees expand their efforts to draft and propose legislation as indicated in this section, the guidelines in this section should be revisited and updated to reflect best practices during this process.

### **Voting**

After the Subcommittee's Chair(s) accumulate what they believe is sufficient information about a legislative bill, the participants in the meeting will be requested to cast a vote. The vote will recommend one of the following positions to the PPA and Board:

- Support;
- Support if Amended;
- Neutral

- Oppose Unless Amended;
- Oppose;
- Watch; or
- To cease any further activity with the bill because it is not relevant or important to EERI's mission.

If time allows, amended bill language approved by the Board will be shared with the Subcommittee members during a meeting for additional comment and a re-vote if necessary. Reasons for support or opposition will be summarized and included in the position documentation. A vote result will be determined by a majority of those participating in the Subcommittee meeting. Votes shall be cast by voice through active participation during the Subcommittee meeting, or under special circumstances by write-in (email) for those unable to attend but who have become familiar with the research information. If enough participants abstain from voting so that a majority of those present (including email votes) cannot be achieved, the opinion position of the plurality may be provided to the PPA and Board with notice that a majority of voters abstained from any position. The Subcommittee Chair(s) will make every reasonable attempt to notify Subcommittee members in advance when a decision will be made during a meeting to ensure that those who wish to participate in that decision have the opportunity to do so. Documents relevant to the subject under discussion will also be made available online in advance of the meeting if possible. Participation is welcomed both by attendance to the meeting and write-in (email) participation. At the Chairs' discretion, a decision may be delayed for a brief period to allow for additional input from Subcommittee members not present but who have previously indicated a desire to vote on a particular issue.

### **Amendments**

The PPA or the Board may wish for specific proposed legislative language to be amended before voting to support. In this case, the Subcommittee's Chair(s) will use their professional expertise to work directly with legislators and/or their staffs to achieve EERI's goals through the legislative process, preferably when time permits, bringing back any new options to the Subcommittee and/or Board for further deliberation and consideration when the new options vary from the approved position.

### **Recommendation to the Board**

Following a vote of the participating members of the Subcommittee, the Subcommittee's Chair(s) will prepare a written recommendation for the PPA and the Board. The recommendation will include a legislative analysis of the bill's intent, effectiveness, and costs; the pros and cons as discussed in Subcommittee meetings and Legislative hearings; a summary of Subcommittee vote results; a summary of minority opinions of Subcommittee members; a summary of opinions from outside the Subcommittee; and a justification of the final recommended position from the Subcommittee. The recommendation must be provided to the Board via the EERI Executive Director (or staff designee) with at least 3 working days' time, when possible, for Board deliberation and review. The Subcommittee Chair(s) may also assign official designees from the Subcommittee's participants to serve as subject-matter liaison(s) who can respond quickly to any requests for clarification by the Board. The Board will make the final determination of EERI's stated position on a legislative bill.

### **Dissemination of Legislative Positions**

Based upon the Board's determination and the Subcommittee's recommendation, EERI staff will implement various public dissemination steps in coordination with and with input from the Subcommittee's liaison, the Subcommittee's Chair(s), and/or PPA Chair(s). These implementation steps may include, but are not limited to, submitting formal letters to the State or Local Legislative Bodies; updating the EERI Legislative Action Center; meeting with or testifying before State Legislators; informing the full EERI membership of new positions via website, social media, newsletter, and preparing a member letterwriting campaign in support of EERI's position. With concurrence by the Board, the Subcommittee Chair(s) may appoint spokesperson(s) from the members of the Subcommittee or staff.

### **Changing or Updating a Legislative Position**

Recognizing the fluid nature of the Legislative process, it may be necessary for the Subcommittee to revisit previously adopted EERI positions to reaffirm, modify, or recommend an update to the position in light of changes to the Legislation or some other influencing factors. To this aim, the Subcommittee's Chair(s) will regularly revisit each current Board Legislative position during Subcommittee meetings to identify changes to the original Legislation or to review and consider new information that may justify revisiting a Board-approved EERI position. If deemed necessary by the Subcommittee's Chair(s) or at the request of any member of the Subcommittee, the Chair(s) may call a vote to re-confirm an existing position or support a change of position. If a majority of those voting agree that the position should be changed, then the Subcommittee shall re-enter the consensus process and submit a new recommendation to the Board, as outlined in the steps above.

### **Regular Updates to the PPA Co-Chairs and the EERI Board**

The Subcommittee's Chair(s) shall report to the PPA Chairs and Board at critical periods in the legislative cycle, but no less than quarterly, with a written update and summary of the active Legislation under consideration and any other actions that are being considered by the Subcommittee. At various times, the Subcommittee may also share oral updates at PPA meetings. These reports are designed to ensure better alignment between PPA legislative efforts and to provide critical context to inform the Board of potential decisions on specific legislation, and allow them to send commentary and feedback to the Subcommittee.

## ***ADVOCATING ON BEHALF OF EERI***

- **In regard to any specific piece of legislation:** You may not speak on behalf of or take any position on behalf of EERI to a specific piece of legislation, even if there is an existing policy position statement in place, unless it has (1) undergone review, (2) gained consensus, and (3) as a result a position letter has been drafted and/or approved at the appropriate level.
  - Once a position letter is approved, any EERI member may use language in that letter to speak on behalf of EERI in support of legislation.
  - Preference for public communications (i.e. official testimonial, interview) is the assigned point of contact for that legislation or, in the event they are unavailable, an EERI member that was actively involved in the development of the position.

- **In regards to any general policy issue:** EERI members may speak on behalf of EERI to provide insight on topics which have an existing, board-approved policy position statement.
  - For example, referencing EERI’s [URM Policy Position Statement](#) in a state that is developing a URM Ordinance. The policy position statement, however, cannot be used to justify support of a specific URM ordinance (see previous bullet).
- **Mechanisms to develop a Position Letter**
  - If the legislation is National and/or Precedent setting
    - See [PPA Policy Position Statement Protocol](#) and work through existing PPA protocols to gain Board approval
  - If it is not National OR Precedent setting
    - A Subcommittee or Regional Chapter may draft a position letter for a piece of legislation. A position letter should meet the following criteria:
      - Uses EERI National template
      - Provides adequate justification for position
      - Be approved by consensus, formal or informal at the Regional Chapter, Subcommittee or Committee level
      - Identifies 1-2 points of contact available for EERI inquiries
      - Be transmitted to EERI Headquarters - [eeri@eeri.org](mailto:eeri@eeri.org) - for dissemination to President, Executive Director, Board Liaison to PPA and PPA Chairs. The purpose is to ensure that EERI National is informed to handle any inquiries that arise from policy positions.

## **APPENDIX**

### **A1. LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS**

This section includes considerations that your Regional Chapter members and/or Legislative Subcommittee should discuss when deciding to propose legislation. It also includes a sample [Proposal Evaluation Form](#) to submit to policymakers if they have not provided a region or state-specific template.

#### **A1.1 INITIAL PHASE OF LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT**

Discuss as a Regional Chapter or Subcommittee the following when evaluating potential seismic safety bills.

1. Context
  - a. What is the issue in seismic safety and resilience that you want to address?
  - b. How do people feel about the issue?
  - c. What outcomes would members like to see?
  - d. How does the issue link or divide different segments of the community?
  - e. Who and what influences opponents to take positions?
  - f. What political forces are influencing decision-makers?
  - g. What will it take to gain support?
2. Essential Facts
  - a. Who is impacted by the issue?
  - b. What factors contribute to the problem or goal?
  - c. What are the consequences (e.g., social, economic) of the issue?
  - d. What are the barriers (political, cultural, etc.) to addressing the issue?
  - e. What are the resources available for addressing the issue?
  - f. What is the history of the issue in this community?
  - g. Are there existing laws or past bills similar to this topic? How could they be modified to meet seismic safety objectives today? Who sponsored those bills/laws and are they still in office?
3. Implementation
  - a. Who will pay for the proposed policy?
    - i. Is there precedence for this in your region/state or other states? How did the policy transpire?
  - b. Which agencies will be undertaking specific actions or charges?
  - c. How long will it take to complete the policy objective?
  - d. How will success be measured in the outcome of the policy?

Always consult subject matter experts in your region and/or the EERI membership as often as possible when developing and/or advocating for legislation. Refer to the [EERI's Membership Portal](#) to seek members that have local or subject matter expertise. Email [policy@eeri.org](mailto:policy@eeri.org) for assistance if additional support is needed to this end.

Adapted from: Citizen Advocacy Center™ *How to Draft a Bill*. Available at:  
<<https://www.citizenadvocacycenter.org/civic-ed-lesson-plans.html>>



## A1.2 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL EVALUATION FORM

**TITLE:**

Include appropriate and concise title of proposed bill.

**CONTACT INFO:**

Name of main contact and affiliation (EERI Co-chair, member, and professional affiliation)

**PROPOSAL SUMMARY:**

Describe the proposal in one sentence.

**PROBLEM:**

Describe the problem(s) that the proposal would address.

**SOLUTION:**

Describe the proposal and how the proposal would address the problem.

**ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Reports, studies, etc., that support the need for the proposal. Include here definitions that require clarification for the bill. For example, terms like *preparedness*, *emergency*, *resilience*, *communities*, *seismic and tsunami events*, should be defined for disambiguation.

**COST:**

Describe the estimated cost of the proposal and identify the entity that would pay for the proposal. If the state would pay, identify a source for the funding. If private funds will be sought, who would be interested in covering the cost?

**LIKELY SUPPORT:**

List organizations that will likely support the proposal.

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:**

Identify the top three arguments in support of the proposal.

**LIKELY OPPOSITION:**

List organizations that will likely oppose the proposal.

**ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION:**

Identify the top three arguments in opposition of the proposal.

Adapted from *Legislative Evaluation Form*, Office of Assemblymember Nazarian, California 46<sup>th</sup> Assembly District.

## **A2 STATEMENT OF ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The questions can be used to frame and decide on the Regional Chapters' or Subcommittees' Statement of Action and Implementation for seismic safety advocacy in your area. The Statement of Action and Implementation is a guiding document that can be internal to a Regional Chapter as well as shared as part of the Regional Chapter Annual Report review submitted to EERI Headquarters. It is recommended that the guiding questions below are used to frame actions and plans for seismic safety advocacy to be included in Chapter Goals and Initiatives in the Annual Report.

When agenda setting and developing your implementation plan, indicate:

1. What will be done (Statement of Action)?
  - a. What topic(s) are you interested in? Have you considered the [EERI Policy Position Statements](#)? Have these been adapted or contextualized to regional needs and/or states' priorities?
  - b. What action(s) are you interested in taking (See [Chapter Advocacy Steps](#) and [Activities for Advocacy](#))
  - c. What part the Regional Chapters' missions and goals could legislative activity complement and/or enhance?
  - d. How does this action fit into the broader or long-term seismic safety and earthquake risk reduction plan for the region and/or state?
2. By whom (Implementation)?
  - a. A sub-committee, a Working Group, a select set of dedicated regional board members, etc.?
3. By when (Implementation)?
  - a. Developing a reasonable timeline that is aligned with state legislative timelines.
4. Using what resources (Implementation)?
  - a. What chapter, sub-committee, or EERI staff time and resources might be needed? This could include webinar hosting, e-blasting, developing a file management system and digital communication strategy between members, etc.
5. Communication, who should know what? (Implementation)
  - a. Who will be the target audience for your action? Is it the Governor, policymaker, the legislative aid(s), the council member, mayor, building department, housing authority, or the broader EERI membership?

It is important to keep members informed in your Regional Chapter of seismic safety actions and implementation plans, and as much as possible, sharing plans and intentions with the EERI Public Policy and Advocacy Chairs. This is especially key when major actions are planned or legislation introduced that the committee is intending to follow. You can email the PPA Chairs at [policy@eeri.org](mailto:policy@eeri.org).



## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES:

AAAS, 2020, *AAAS Communication Toolkit*. American Association for the Advancement of Science. Available at < <https://www.aaas.org/resources/communication-toolkit> >

AAAS, 2020, *Policy and Public Statements*. American Association for the Advancement of Science. Available at < <https://www.aaas.org/statements> >

AAAS, 2020, *Workshop on Advocacy in Science: Advocacy Initiatives*. American Association for the Advancement of Science. Available at < <https://www.aaas.org/resources/workshop-advocacy-science-advocacy-initiatives> >

Cockrell et al., 2018. *Embracing Advocacy in Science*. University of South Florida. Available at < <https://www.marine.usf.edu/documents/marcy-cockrell-advocacy-2018.pdf>>

Pierson, S. [ed], 2012. "Science Advocacy: What is it and What is the Role of Professional Societies?" AMSTATNEWS, 1 January 2012. Available at < <https://magazine.amstat.org/blog/2012/01/01/science-advocacy/> >

University of Kansas. 2020. *Community Toolbox: Section 10. General Rules for Organizing for Legislative Advocacy*. Available at < <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/advocacy/direct-action/legislative-advocacy/main> >