



# DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

*Managing California's Working Lands*

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## **CALIFORNIA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY ISSUES OFFICIAL EARTHQUAKE FAULT ZONE MAPS FOR L.A. AREAS**

SACRAMENTO – The California Geological Survey (CGS) today issued final versions of two regulatory maps to aid in land-use planning in the greater Los Angeles area. These Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Maps outline zones of required site investigations along the Hollywood Fault as well as additional active faults in the Monrovia-Duarte-Azusa areas. They are used when new structures for human occupancy are located within the zones.

“The final maps are very similar to the preliminary versions issued in January,” said Dr. John Parrish, State Geologist of California and head of CGS. “We received robust public input on these maps. It is important to note that comments and input must be technically supported by geological and seismic data to make substantial changes for the finalized versions, as the purpose of these zones is to help ensure public safety and minimize damage to property in the event of a large earthquake.

“We took an objective, dispassionate look at all the reports and information we could find and all that was provided to us, and benefitted from some access to new trenches in the area. All the data that was provided to us have been incorporated into the final maps for all to see. Although some of the fault traces have been adjusted, the zones of required investigation still exist.”

According to Tim McCrink, who manages the Alquist-Priolo program, new information prompted CGS to adjust some traces of the Hollywood Fault displayed on the map. However, the zones – which do not prohibit development but rather prompt a site-specific investigation – are typically about a quarter-mile wide surrounding the fault traces, and these did not change much.

The Alquist-Priolo Act was passed into law following the destructive 1971 magnitude 6.6 San Fernando Earthquake, which caused extensive surface ruptures that damaged numerous buildings. Of the various hazards associated with major earthquakes – including shaking, landslides and liquefaction -- building atop the surface trace of an active fault is the easiest to avoid.

Under the Alquist-Priolo Act, before a new project can be permitted within a zone, lead agencies must require a geologic investigation to demonstrate that proposed buildings will not be constructed across active faults. An evaluation and written report of a specific site must be prepared by a California-licensed geologist. Disclosure that property is within a zone must be made in real estate transactions; otherwise, the zones do not affect existing developments unless extensive additions or remodeling are proposed. Ultimately, the local lead agency, not CGS, has the final say about issuing building permits in zoned areas.

Although CGS had created zone maps in other areas of the Los Angeles Basin, the Hollywood Fault was not previously zoned because of budget limitations and because the city already had earlier established a special zone. Research of the area over the past 15 years, however, provided better information on the age and location of the Hollywood Fault, prompting creation of the new zone map.

CGS notified the Los Angeles City Council of its intention to zone the Hollywood Fault in July 2013. At the time, the Council and City Planning Commission were reviewing plans for the Millennium Hollywood Project – one million square feet of office, residential, hotel and retail space, including 39- and 35-story towers near the landmark Capitol Records building.

“Ensuring that the decision-makers had the best, most up-to-date information about the Hollywood Fault’s location prompted us to investigate the site and create a zone,” Parrish said.

Added McCrink: “Something we heard numerous times when we started is that there isn’t a lot of evidence for activity on some of the traces of the Hollywood Fault during the Holocene (approximately the last 11,000 years). As an interesting corollary, in mid-July, we did some trenching on the West Napa Fault and didn’t find the evidence we were looking for. Then in August, a magnitude 6 earthquake struck on a trace of the fault we were investigating a few miles away.”

CGS also released a final zone map along portions of the Sierra Madre, Raymond, Clamshell Canyon, Duarte and related faults in a number of neighboring communities north of the 210 freeway.

“While we made minor adjustments to the Hollywood Fault zones, there were more significant changes to the Azusa map,” McCrink noted. “In fact, we eliminated part of the zone running through Azusa itself.”

The maps were finalized after review by local government entities, the public, and the State Mining and Geology Board. Paper copies of the maps can be viewed at the Los Angeles County Planning Department or at CGS offices, located in Sacramento, Menlo Park and Los Angeles. PDF images and GIS files can be found online at CGS’ website (<http://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/Pages/Index.aspx>).

There have been 27 earthquakes associated with surface faulting in California since the first Alquist-Priolo zone maps were issued in 1974, including the Napa quake. Although most of the ground surface displacement associated with these events was relatively minor, there have been seven earthquakes with surface fault offsets greater than a foot.

There are now 559 Alquist-Priolo zone maps affecting 36 counties and more than 100 communities.