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EBB Opens Registration for \$3,000 Grants to Strengthen Older California Homes Against Earthquakes

SAN FRANCISCO, January 20, 2016 – California homeowners have through February 20 to apply for up to \$3,000 in funding for retrofits to protect their homes from catastrophic earthquake damage. The Earthquake Brace + Bolt (EBB) program today opened the registration period for \$4.8 million in seismic retrofit funds, including \$3 million from the State of California.

The California Earthquake Authority (CEA) estimates that more than 1.2 million houses in high-hazard areas in Northern and Southern California are particularly vulnerable to earthquakes because of the type of construction. These are pre-1979 houses that aren't bolted to their foundations, include a crawl space and have unbraced "cripple walls" (low walls between the foundation and first floor). In a strong earthquake, the crawl space is vulnerable to collapse, causing the home to slide off its foundation.

In the relatively moderate 6.0-magnitude Napa earthquake of August 2014, houses with this type of damage received estimates of up to \$300,000 for repairs including lifting the house while the foundation is rebuilt.

For this type of home, retrofits can be a relatively simple and cost-effective way to reduce the risk of catastrophic damage. Typical retrofits cost between \$2,000 and \$10,000 and involve bolting a house to its foundation and adding bracing around the perimeter of the crawl space.

"You wouldn't feel safe driving a car that has no seat belts, and you shouldn't feel safe living in a house that hasn't been bolted to its foundation," said Janiele Maffei, Chief Mitigation Officer of CEA and Executive Director of EBB. "To protect their families and most valuable asset, all Californians should ensure their homes are properly braced and bolted."

Retrofit Funds Available in 18 Cities

In June 2015, the California legislature passed and Governor Jerry Brown signed a budget allocating \$3 million to bring the EBB program to more homeowners in earthquake-prone areas across California during 2016. The \$3 million comes in addition to \$1.8 million in funding from the California Earthquake Authority's Loss Mitigation Fund.

The 2016 program is available for homes in more than 100 ZIP codes in 18 cities:

- Albany
- Berkeley
- Burlingame
- Emeryville
- Hillsborough
- Millbrae
- Oakland
- Piedmont
- San Francisco
- San Leandro
- Woodside
- Los Angeles
- Pasadena
- San Bernardino
- San Marino
- Santa Monica
- South Pasadena
- West Hollywood

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Registration is open from today through February 20. Eligible homeowners can apply for funding to retrofit their homes at EarthquakeBraceBolt.com, where they can find information on the specific type of retrofit including videos, program rules and the full list of eligible ZIP codes.

“Our communities will recover more quickly after a major earthquake if this type of structural damage is prevented and people can remain in their homes,” said Tina Curry, Deputy Director of the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services. “We are proud to be a partner with CEA in this important effort to make homes safer and increase community resilience.”

“We know that cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles are aggressively preparing for the next big one, but the State of California is also stepping up,” said Assemblymember David Chiu (D-San Francisco), who authored a bill last year that helped with the successful effort to secure \$3 million in additional funding for EBB. “We will continue working to support and expand initiatives to strengthen our homes against earthquakes that are a fact of life in California.”

“Retrofitting single family homes is an important part of San Francisco’s 30-year earthquake safety implementation program,” said Patrick Otellini, San Francisco’s Chief Resilience Officer. “For San Francisco residents with vulnerable homes, the relatively small cost of a retrofit is the single best thing they can do to protect their investment. We urge them to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the Earthquake Brace + Bolt program.”

How EBB Works to Encourage and Facilitate Retrofits

EBB is working to build awareness and momentum for residential retrofits. It promotes the use of standard plan sets, works with local planning departments to streamline the permitting process, and encourages contractors to become trained in seismic retrofits.

EBB’s website offers a list of contractors who have successfully completed FEMA seismic retrofit training. Ninety-five percent of program retrofits are completed by contractors listed in the EBB Directory. Contractors interested in doing residential retrofits are encouraged to register on the EBB website and complete the free training available there. As of December 31, 2015, more than 400 contractors had completed the FEMA retrofit course, up from 140 a year earlier.

About Earthquake Brace + Bolt (EBB)

Established by the California Residential Mitigation Program, EBB offers up to \$3,000 to help California homeowners retrofit their houses to reduce potential damage from earthquakes. A residential seismic retrofit makes a house more resistant to earthquake activity, such as ground shaking and soil failure, by bolting the house to its foundation and adding bracing around the perimeter of the crawl space. For more information, please visit <http://www.EarthquakeBraceBolt.com>.

About the California Residential Mitigation Program (CRMP)

CRMP was established in 2011 to help Californians strengthen their homes against damage from earthquakes. CRMP is a joint powers authority created by the California Earthquake Authority and the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services. For more information, please visit <http://www.CaliforniaResidentialMitigationProgram.com>.

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