



IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 27, 2017

Contact: Sarah Sol (916) 661-5502

ssol@calquake.com

Chris Nance (916) 661-5521

cnance@calquake.com

**Anniversary of 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake offers reminder
to Californians to reduce their risk of loss from earthquakes**

Quake east of Los Angeles damaged many homes and apartments

(SACRAMENTO) Sunday marks the 30th anniversary of the 1987 magnitude-5.9 Whittier Narrows earthquake—reported to have caused \$358 million in property damage (equivalent to about \$760 million today).*

The Whittier Narrows earthquake occurred about 12 miles east of Los Angeles on a previously unknown fault. The quake was moderate in strength, but it was responsible for eight deaths, numerous injuries and substantial damage.

“So often when we remember the damage a historical earthquake caused, we note the earthquake occurred on a previously unknown fault,” said Glenn Pomeroy, CEO of the California Earthquake Authority (CEA). “Just like this earthquake, the magnitude-6.7 Northridge quake that struck seven years later was on an unknown fault. Scientists are still discovering new faults. And that’s why we need to remember that no place in our beautiful state is safe from earthquakes—they can strike anywhere, without warning.”

The Whittier Narrows earthquake was particularly destructive in the town of Whittier, the “Old Town” section of Pasadena and the old downtown of Alhambra, where a number of unreinforced masonry buildings suffered partial or complete collapses. Wood-framed structures performed better, but damage such as collapsed or cracked chimneys, cracked plaster, broken windows, and damaged porches and garage doors still occurred. Hundreds of houses and thousands of apartment units were destroyed or heavily damaged.

“Unreinforced masonry buildings are much more susceptible to earthquake damage than wood-frame buildings. But even wood-frame houses are not immune to damage,” said Pomeroy. “Older houses, in particular, may have vulnerabilities that need to be addressed. As a result, CEA has been working hard to build awareness about the value of earthquake insurance, seismic retrofitting, and other ways Californians can reduce their risk of earthquake damage and loss.”

CEA is financially strong, and if the Whittier Narrows earthquake were to reoccur today, claim payments to CEA policyholders would use only a very small portion of CEA’s claim-paying capacity. To learn more about [earthquake insurance](#) through CEA, [brace-and-bolt retrofits](#) to strengthen older houses against shaking, or how CEA policyholders can receive a [premium discount](#) of up to 20 percent for a properly retrofitted older house, visit CEA’s website at EarthquakeAuthority.com.

Californians can take other steps to prepare for earthquakes, as well, such as securing their space, creating a disaster plan, organizing disaster supplies and participating in the world's largest earthquake drill, the [Great California ShakeOut](#).

About CEA

The California Earthquake Authority (CEA) is a not-for-profit, privately funded, publicly managed organization that provides residential earthquake insurance and encourages Californians to reduce their risk of earthquake loss. Learn more at [EarthquakeAuthority.com](#).

* Information about this earthquake's magnitude and the damage it caused came from the [Southern California Earthquake Data Center website](#) and U.S. Geological Survey professional paper 1527, "[Seismicity of the United States, 1568-1989 \(Revised\)](#)." The 2017 dollar amount was calculated using the California Bureau of Labor Statistics' [CPI inflation calculator](#), without adjusting for significant changes in the area's population density, building types or other factors.

#