



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 28 2024

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 1119 without my signature.

This bill would provide an extension to seismic safety compliance deadlines for four Providence hospitals: St. Joseph Hospital and General Hospital in the City of Eureka, St. Jude Medical Center in the City of Fullerton, and Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center in the City of Tarzana.

The magnitude 6.6 Sylmar Earthquake in 1971 caused the collapse of several hospitals, rendering many incapable of providing emergency care. As a result, the Legislature passed the Alfred E. Alquist Hospital Seismic Safety Act in 1972, requiring new hospitals to be constructed to ensure they can provide emergency services after a disaster. Later in 1994, this requirement was extended to include pre-1973 hospitals, following the Northridge earthquake.

The law set a January 1, 2008 deadline by which general acute care hospitals must be retrofitted or replaced so that they do not pose a risk of full collapse, and a January 1, 2030 deadline by which they must be capable of remaining operational. The vast majority of California hospitals have taken the necessary steps to prevent a full collapse in the event of an earthquake, and are now working to meet the higher standard of remaining operational.

The Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) categorizes the probable seismic performance of a building's structural systems and risk to life into five Structural Performance Category (SPC) ratings. An SPC-1 category



building has the lowest rating, indicating a significant risk of building collapse in a major earthquake. The law that required all SPC-1 buildings to be retrofitted or replaced by 2008 — to avoid a full collapse — has been extended multiple times, most recently through a final January 1, 2025 deadline. It is this deadline, for the most dangerous and highest-risk hospital structures, that the bill proposes to extend again. This bill requests an additional extension for ten buildings at significant risk of collapse in a major earthquake (SPC-1) located across the four named hospitals in parts of California known for seismic activity.

All Californians depend on the hospitals in their communities for reliable, high-quality health care services and emergency response in times of need. We trust our hospitals with our own lives and the lives of our loved ones. I cannot in good faith support a further extension to the 2008 SPC-1 deadline, knowing that these buildings may collapse in the event of an earthquake. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, Northern California faces a 72 percent chance and the Los Angeles region faces a 60 percent chance of a magnitude 6.7 or greater earthquake by 2043. The question is not if California will experience a significant earthquake, it's when.

Without the deadline extension proposed in this bill, the four hospitals will be faced with the reality of fines or being unable to renew their license under the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), leading to a potential loss of hospital care in their communities. As such, I encourage the named hospitals at risk of non-compliance with the 2025 SPC-1 deadline to prioritize the remaining work, and I am directing HCAI and CDPH to provide technical assistance as needed.

For these reasons, I cannot sign this bill.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom