

Improving Tsunami Warnings Nationwide **March 14, 2008, 10AM — United States Capitol, Room HC-7**

Sponsored jointly by the IRIS Consortium, the Seismological Society of America, the Geological Society of America, and the American Geophysical Union

Organized in cooperation with the Hazards Caucus Alliance

After more than 200,000 people died from the December 2004 Sumatra earthquake and Indian Ocean tsunami, US Government agencies quickly addressed the question “What must we do to protect ourselves from similar events?” The Office of Science and Technology Policy coordinated a response by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the US Geological Survey (USGS) on improvements to tsunami hazard mitigation nationwide. Prompt Congressional action enabled these Federal agencies to carry out effective disaster mitigation that included

Deploying additional buoy systems operated by NOAA,

Expanding real-time telemetry of the Global Seismographic Network,

Upgrading the capabilities of the USGS’s National Earthquake Information Center,

Constructing a comprehensive tsunami warning system for the Caribbean Sea.

USGS and NOAA cooperated closely and today these systems are effectively serving the nation. This briefing will summarize improvements to tsunami warning and the role and status of the observatory networks and warning centers.

Dr. Mary Lou Zoback will briefly summarize the hazard and the need for resilience, and moderate the briefing. Dr. Zoback, a vice president of Risk Management Solutions, was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1995 for world leadership in mapping and interpreting tectonic stresses. Before joining RMS, Dr. Zoback served as the Coordinator for the USGS Northern California Earthquake Hazard Program, is a past president of the Geological Society of America, and received an Earthquake Engineering Research Institute Award for Innovation and Exemplary Practice in Earthquake Risk Reduction.

Dr. Lind Gee will describe USGS efforts that contribute to enhanced tsunami mitigation, including the role that USGS stations play in supporting tsunami warning, the challenges in building new stations and real-time telemetry, and the functioning of the now completed network. Dr. Gee is the scientist-in-charge of the Albuquerque Seismological Laboratory, the USGS office charged with installation of the Caribbean seismic stations and the operation and maintenance of many stations of the Global Seismographic Network.

Dr. David Green will explain how an oceanographic network confirms generation of a tsunami by an earthquake, volcanic eruption or underwater landslide – and thus raises the alarm level from tsunami alert to tsunami warning – and how hydrodynamic modeling contributes to planning that reduces tsunami risk and to responding more quickly when a tsunami occurs. Dr. Green is the NOAA Tsunami Program Manager.

Dr. Stuart Nishenko will describe unmet needs, including a national tsunami hazard map and tsunami building codes, as well as funding requirements to sustain warning systems. Dr. Nishenko, the Senior Seismologist of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, chairs the California Integrated Seismic Network Advisory Committee, is a member of the U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Earthquake Studies Advisory Committee, chairs the Government Relations Committee for the Seismological Society of America, and served as a member of the National Research Council committee on “Economic Benefits of Improved Seismic Monitoring”.