



U.S. Geological Survey and Orange County Register

Earthquake early warning systems like ShakeAlert work because the warning message can be transmitted almost instantaneously, whereas the shaking waves from the earthquake travel through the shallow layers of the Earth at speeds of one to a few kilometers per second (0.5 to 3 miles per second). This diagram shows how such a system would operate.

## Trump's budget cuts quake warning system funding

Cuts could end project

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — President Donald Trump's budget proposal would cut federal funding for an earthquake early warning system for California, Oregon and Washington state, a development that seismology experts and some local leaders say would be the end of the project.

The system being developed in conjunction with various universities is intended at providing critical seconds of warning when an earthquake has started and potentially dangerous shaking is imminent, allowing time for people to take cover and to slow or halt such things as critical industrial processes and transportation systems.

A version of the ShakeAlert system has been undergoing testing but still needs to have more seismic sensors installed in Northern California, Oregon and Washington state. The proposed funding cuts for the next fiscal year starting Oct. 1 would come from the budget of the U.S. Geological Survey, a bureau of

the U.S. Interior Department.

Veteran seismologist Lucy Jones, who recently retired from the U.S. Geological Survey after years of providing earthquake information to the public, said she was deeply disappointed.

"Eliminating the \$10 million (per) year that the government has been spending would stop the program and waste the \$23 million that has already been invested," she said in a statement. "The talented scientists and technicians that are working on the project now will go to other jobs, so their experience and expertise would be lost."

U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff, a Los Angeles-area Democrat, said in a Facebook post that the system should not be stopped just as it is being expanded after years of work to educate the public and Congress on its benefits.

"Support for the early warning system in Congress is sustained, growing and bipartisan, and we will not accept this attempt by the president to cut a vital funding stream for a program that will protect life, property and critical infrastructure," Schiff wrote.

U.S. Rep. Ken Calvert, a

Republican who represents an inland Southern California district, is chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior and the Environment and has supported funding of the earthquake warning system in the past.

In a statement he did not mention the warning system specifically, but noted that the budget "proposes some reductions for agencies that fall within the Interior Subcommittee's jurisdiction. Those agencies perform important work, so the members of our committee will be faced with making some difficult decisions."

In Los Angeles, Councilman Mitch Englander called the funding cuts "a threat to the lives of millions of people in California and beyond."

Englander's district includes the epicenter of the deadly 1994 Northridge earthquake that caused billions of dollars in damage to Los Angeles and neighboring areas.

"When it comes to earthquakes, seconds matter," he said in a statement. "A fully deployed early warning system would give time for elevators to shut down, hospitals to turn on backup generators, and people to take cover."

## Carbon cap rule in Washington faces legal clash with industry

Changes meant to help combat climate change

By PHUONG LE  
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Even as the Trump administration seeks to roll back Obama-era rules to curb greenhouse gas emissions at coal-fired power plants, Washington state is forging ahead with its own rules to cap carbon pollution from big industrial facilities.

But the state faces legal challenges as it begins requiring large polluters to gradually reduce carbon emissions over time to combat climate change.

Four natural gas utilities and eight industry groups are seeking to invalidate Washington's so-called clean air rule, which took effect in January and affects such facilities as power plants, fuel and natural gas distributors, oil refineries and manufacturers.

A Thurston County Superior Court judge is set to hear arguments Friday on one aspect of the case. Arguments on the merits of the challenge are expected later.

After failing to persuade

lawmakers to pass an ambitious cap-and-trade program, Gov. Jay Inslee directed state regulators in 2015 to use existing authority to limit carbon emissions from Washington's largest sources. He called climate change a threat to the state and said the new regulations would help Washington meet its requirements to reduce carbon emissions.

"We've looked carefully at our law, and we believe we have the authority to do it, and that's the authority we're using," said Stu Clark, air quality program manager with the state Ecology Department. "That's what the court will sort through. We didn't do this lightly."

Industry challengers

Industry groups led by the Association of Washington Business challenged the regulations last fall. Four investor-owned natural gas utilities — Avista Corp., Cascade Natural Gas Corp., Northwest Natural Gas Co. and Puget Sound Energy — also filed a separate suit. The two cases have been consolidated.

The petitioners say the Ecology Department doesn't have the authority to create the new carbon cap program,

among other arguments. They also contend the agency violated several state laws when it wrote the rules, including not doing a thorough analysis of the impacts.

"The rule paints a picture that only a few are going to be hit. And what we're saying is that it's going to hit everybody," said Bob Battles, general counsel for the Association of Washington Business, referring to effects on businesses, families and others.

Washington state is a low-carbon leader, he said, and the rule is unnecessary. "We don't think they have the authority to do this."

Puget Sound Energy spokesman Grant Ringel said the program will have the unintended consequence of increased costs to customers as well as increased carbon emissions, since the utility could be forced to rely more heavily on its coal-fired plants.

The state's lawyers argue the rule should "be upheld in its entirety."

Three conservation groups — Washington Environmental Council, Climate Solutions and Natural Resources Defense Council — have intervened to defend the state's position.

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