

ORDINANCE NO. 170406

An urgency ordinance relating to the repair of welded steel moment frame buildings with damage resulting from the 1994 Northridge Earthquake.

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles is located in Seismic Zone 4, which is considered by experts to be the most seismically active zone in the country; and

WHEREAS, Los Angeles is bounded on the east by the San Andreas Fault and the region is interlaced with other earthquake faults running through, adjacent to and under the City of Los Angeles; and

WHEREAS, the 1994 Northridge Earthquake caused considerable damage to Los Angeles buildings and structures, including welded steel moment frame buildings located in the San Fernando Valley and West Los Angeles areas of the City; and

WHEREAS, there were 61 people who lost their lives in the earthquake, but there could have been several thousand who lost their lives if the earthquake had occurred at midday instead of 4:31 in the morning; and

WHEREAS, experts expect a massive earthquake on one of the faults under the city within the next 30 years, and several earthquakes similar in intensity to the Northridge Earthquake during that same period; and

WHEREAS, studies have been conducted of the earthquake damage by structural engineers from the Department of Building and Safety (Department) and the Structural Engineers Association of Southern California (SEAOSC); and

WHEREAS, these engineers have determined that welded steel moment frame buildings located in high earthquake damaged areas were severely impacted by the Northridge Earthquake and its aftershocks; and

WHEREAS, the Building Code does not allow a welded steel moment frame building to be maintained with damaged connections and it is necessary to insure that repairs to these welded steel moment frame buildings be performed in an expeditious manner; and

WHEREAS, the damage to these welded steel moment frame buildings could expose occupants of these buildings to a potential life-safety risk in future earthquakes, and the City of Los Angeles must protect its population and property and enforce the Building Code so as to provide effective protection to all its citizens,

NOW, THEREFORE,

THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The Los Angeles Municipal Code is hereby amended by adding a new Section 91.8908 to read as follows:

SEC. 91.8908. SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR THE REPAIR OF WELDED STEEL MOMENT FRAME BUILDINGS LOCATED IN HIGH EARTHQUAKE DAMAGED AREAS.

(a) Welded steel moment frame buildings located in high earthquake damaged areas experienced damage in the beam to column moment connection as a result of the earthquake of January 17, 1994 and its aftershocks. Except as provided by this section, it is unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to maintain a building with damaged welded moment connections. The purpose of this section is to provide a practicable method, in addition to any other remedy available by law, whereby earthquake damaged welded steel frame moment buildings may be repaired.

(b) If the Department determines that a commercial building is a welded steel moment frame building located in a high earthquake damaged area, then the Department may issue an order to the owner, as shown on the last equalized assessment roll, to repair all damaged welded connections.

Within 180 days of mailing of the order the building owner shall submit a report to the Department indicating the number of damaged welded connections and proposed repair procedures. This inspection report shall be prepared under the direction of a structural engineer and shall include the results of any ultrasonic tests or the results of other approved methods of testing of connections. Permits shall be obtained and repairs to the damaged connections shall commence within 90 days of the approved submitted approval report. Repairs shall be completed within two years of the date of the permit.

(c) For purposes of this section, the following areas are high earthquake damaged areas:

That area bounded by, Mulholland Drive, Beverly Glen Boulevard, Pico Boulevard, Overland Avenue, Venice Boulevard, Centinela Avenue, Montana Avenue, 26th Street, Sunset Boulevard, and Mandeville Canyon Road.

That area of the City which is North of Mulholland Drive, and bounded by Universal City, Burbank, Glendale, Los Angeles County, and Ventura County.

The City Council, by resolution, may extend the boundaries of these earthquake damaged areas if it finds that damage has occurred to welded steel moment frame buildings outside the boundaries described above. The Department may issue an order for any welded steel moment frame building outside of the high earthquake damaged areas if the Department determines that the building has experienced earthquake damage.

(d) If an owner fails to comply with an order issued pursuant to this section within the time set forth in the order or such additional time as may be granted by the Department, then the Department may secure compliance utilizing the procedures set forth in Section 91.8903. However, if the Department utilizes Section 91.8903, then the order described in paragraph 1 of Subsection (a) of Section 91.8903 shall indicate that the building is within the scope of Division 89 because of the owner's failure to comply with the requirements of this section. Further the time for compliance set forth in Paragraph 2 of Subsection (a) of Section 91.8903 may be reduced to 10 days, and the order to vacate described in Paragraph 3 of Subsection (a) of Section 91.8903 may be issued whenever the Department deems appropriate.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Code to the contrary, the owner of any building, who fails to comply with an order issued pursuant to this Section within the time limits established in this Section, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. Further, if the Department determines at any time that the building is a hazardous building or unsafe to occupy, then it may order that the building be vacated or that other corrective actions be taken.

Sec. 2. Within 180 days after the adoption of this Ordinance, the Department shall report back to the Council with recommendations for the inspection of residential welded steel moment frame buildings located in high earthquake damaged areas.

Sec. 3. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Ordinance is found to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions of this Ordinance which can be implemented without the invalid provision, and, to this end, the provisions of this Ordinance are declared severable.

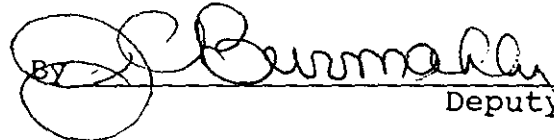
Sec 4. URGENCY CLAUSE.

The City Council finds and declares that this Ordinance is required for the immediate protection of the public peace, health and safety. Failure to do necessary repair work could cause these buildings to fail in a future earthquake thus jeopardizing the health, safety and welfare of building tenants, employees, visitors and pedestrians. Therefore, this Ordinance shall become effective upon publication pursuant to Section 281 of the Los Angeles City Charter.

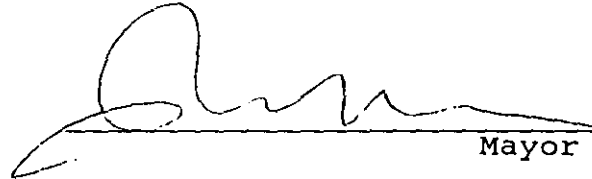
Sec. 5. The City Clerk shall certify to the passage of this ordinance and cause the same to be published in some daily newspaper printed and published in the City of Los Angeles.

I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was passed by the Council of the City of Los Angeles, by a vote of not less than three-fourths of all of its members, at its meeting of FEB 22 1995.

ELIAS MARTINEZ, City Clerk

By  Deputy

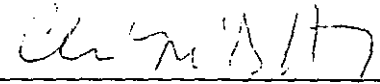
Approved MAR 01 1995

 Mayor

Approved as to Form and Legality

NOV 29 1994

James K. Hahn, City Attorney

By 
CLAUDIA MCGEE HENRY
Senior Assistant City Attorney

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