

13-0964

# MOTION

According to FEMA, recent earthquakes have proven the vulnerability of wood-frame residential buildings with weak first stories, commonly known as soft-story buildings. Soft-story buildings built before 1978 are particularly at risk during an earthquake because their ground floors generally have perimeter walls that lack adequate strength. Hence, during an earthquake, lateral forces become concentrated within that story, instead of being distributed efficiently over the height of the structure. Consequently, the building is liable to "pancake" and collapse.

Approximately 200 soft-story buildings, containing thousands of residential units, were severely damaged or destroyed during the 1994 Northridge earthquake. The Northridge Meadows apartment complex, which was a soft-story building, saw 16 deaths during the 1994 earthquake – the heaviest concentration of deaths from the quake.

Earthquake preparation is an important matter of public safety in the City of Los Angeles. The danger is not just the damage accrued during an earthquake, but also that the buildings are unusable after an earthquake, leaving people homeless and forcing the City to deal with further problems.

Currently, the City of Los Angeles has a voluntary retrofitting ordinance in place. However, the City of Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety does not have a database that documents the precise number or locations of such structures (soft-story, wood-frame, multi-unit residential buildings).


I THEREFORE MOVE that the Department of Building and Safety be instructed to provide to the City Council a comprehensive proposal for how the Department can identify and account for wood-frame soft-story residential buildings (with two or more stories, and five or more units) built prior to 1978 that exist in the City, and what resources such a survey would require.

PRESENTED BY



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SECONDED BY



ORIGINAL

  
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