



## Senator Feinstein Urges California Coastal Communities to Protect its Residents from Tsunami Threat

July 31, 2006

**Washington, DC** -- In letters mailed to the mayors and other representatives of all California coastal cities and counties, as well as to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif) called on California's coastal communities to prepare for the threat posed by tsunamis.

Shortly after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Senator Feinstein asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to investigate the readiness of America's coastal communities to respond to a large-scale tsunami.

The GAO report, issued last month, concluded that the Pacific Coast states of California, Alaska, Hawaii, Washington, and Oregon, as well as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the Caribbean face the greatest tsunami hazard. Likewise, the GAO concluded that while federal and state partners are collaborating to help communities reduce the threat posed by tsunamis, significant challenges still remain in providing adequate protection for our nation's at-risk communities.

**“The GAO report confirmed that California is one of five states most at-risk of a major tsunami. Looking at the terrible devastation caused by tsunamis in the last few years, I ask all coastal communities to do whatever is necessary to protect their residents from this grave threat,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“The National Weather Service’s TsunamiReady program provides comprehensive expertise for these communities to make sure they have an adequate emergency system in place in the event of a tsunami. I sincerely hope that each community will take advantage of this program.”**

As part of her letter, Senator Feinstein urged coastal communities to participate in the National Weather Service's TsunamiReady program. The TsunamiReady program is the federal government's primary effort to help communities prepare for tsunamis. The program brings together federal, state, and local officials, and the public-at-large to increase awareness of tsunami threats and help communities design an emergency response plan.

Currently only four coastal communities in California are designated TsunamiReady sites by the National Weather Service: Crescent City, UC Santa Barbara, Dana Point, and San Clemente.

California historically has been susceptible to tsunamis. Since 1800, at least 14 tsunamis with waves six-feet or higher have struck the coast of California, several of which inflicted major destruction. In 1964, an Alaskan tsunami with waves reaching 20 feet struck the coast of California near Crescent City causing \$7.5 million in damage and eleven deaths. Three tsunamis also flooded Santa Barbara during the early 1800s, including one in 1812 that caused widespread devastation.

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