

BOARD of SUPERVISORS




City Hall
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MEMORANDUM

Date: March 20, 2026

To: Carmen Chu, Capital Planning Committee
Mary Ellen Carroll, Executive Director, Department of Emergency Management
Michael Makstman, Executive Director, Department of Technology

From:  Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board, Board of Supervisors

Subject: Emergency Preparedness - Restoration of Outdoor Public Warning System (File No. 260142)

On March 3, 2026, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 130-26, sponsored by Supervisor Alan Wong (File No. 260142, Emergency Preparedness - Restoration of Outdoor Public Warning System) enacted on March 13, 2026.

Please find the attached courtesy copy of the Resolution for your office's information and awareness.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Office of the Clerk of the Board at (415) 554-5184.

c: Member of the Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Alan Wong
Adam Thongsavat, Liaison to the Board of Supervisors, Mayor's Office
Aly Bonde, Policy Director, Mayor's Office
Olivia Scanlon, Chief of Staff, Department of Emergency Management
Michelle Busse, Executive Secretary, Department of Emergency Management
Karen Hong Yee, Acting Chief of Staff, Department of Technology

ch:jw:ams

1 [Emergency Preparedness - Restoration of Outdoor Public Warning System]

2
3 **Resolution urging the Department of Emergency Management and Department of**
4 **Technology to prioritize the restoration of San Francisco's outdoor public warning**
5 **system in tsunami evacuation zones and coastal areas, and to allocate funding for this**
6 **critical public safety infrastructure.**

7
8 WHEREAS, San Francisco's outdoor public warning system, consisting of
9 approximately 119 sirens located throughout the City, was taken offline in December 2019
10 due to cybersecurity concerns, and has remained non-operational for over six years; and

11 WHEREAS, An operational outdoor public warning system is a valuable tool for alerting
12 residents and visitors to imminent dangers, including tsunamis, earthquakes, and other
13 emergencies, particularly when cell phone-based alerts may be insufficient; and

14 WHEREAS, On December 5, 2024, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake off the coast of
15 Humboldt County triggered a tsunami warning for San Francisco, during which the City lacked
16 a functional outdoor warning system to supplement cell phone alerts, requiring first
17 responders to physically drive to Ocean Beach with loudspeakers to warn residents; and

18 WHEREAS, The December 20, 2025, power outage, which affected approximately
19 130,000 San Francisco customers for up to 48 hours, demonstrated the vulnerability of relying
20 solely on cell phone-based emergency alerts, as residents' phones lost battery power and
21 with it, their ability to receive emergency notifications or contact 911; and

22 WHEREAS, On July 4, 2025, catastrophic flash floods along the Guadalupe River in
23 Texas killed at least 119 people in Kerr County, which lacked a warning siren system, while
24 the nearby community of Comfort, Texas, which had operational warning sirens, experienced
25 zero fatalities despite significant flooding; and

1 WHEREAS, Kerr County, Texas had previously rejected a warning system costing
2 approximately \$1 million due to budget concerns, and in the wake of the tragedy, the Texas
3 Legislature appropriated \$50 million for flood warning systems, underscoring the
4 consequences of delayed investment in emergency warning infrastructure; and

5 WHEREAS, The August 2023 Maui wildfires, which killed over 100 people in Lahaina,
6 demonstrated both the limitations of cell phone-based alerts during power outages and the
7 need for outdoor warning systems capable of broadcasting specific evacuation instructions;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, San Francisco's AlertSF system, while valuable, has only approximately
10 195,000 subscribers out of more than 800,000 residents, leaving the majority of the population
11 without opt-in emergency notifications; and

12 WHEREAS, Cell phone-based alerts, while useful, have significant limitations: they
13 may not reach people who are sleeping, outdoors, or in areas with poor cellular reception, and
14 they do not effectively reach tourists, unhoused residents, elderly individuals, or others who
15 may not have smartphones; and

16 WHEREAS, Emergency management experts emphasize the importance of
17 redundancy in warning systems, and outdoor sirens provide a critical backup when other
18 communication methods fail; and

19 WHEREAS, The estimated cost to restore San Francisco's outdoor public Warning
20 system has continued to escalate the longer the project has been delayed; and

21 WHEREAS, San Francisco faces ongoing risks from earthquakes, tsunamis, severe
22 weather events, and other emergencies that require rapid public notification; now, therefore,
23 be it

24 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Capital Planning Committee to
25 identify funding for restoration of the outdoor public warning system, beginning with sirens in

1 tsunami evacuation zones and coastal areas, through unallocated Earthquake Safety and
2 Emergency Response (ESER) bond funds or other existing emergency preparedness
3 resources; and, be it

4 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Department of
5 Emergency Management to pursue state and federal grant opportunities, including through
6 FEMA and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, to offset costs of modern
7 warning system infrastructure; and, be it

8 FURTHER RESOLVED, That upon identification of funding, the Board of Supervisors
9 urges the Department of Emergency Management and Department of Technology to develop
10 and present a plan and timeline for restoration of the system, prioritizing tsunami evacuation
11 zones and coastal areas; and, be it

12 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors supports the restoration of the
13 outdoor public warning system as an important component of a comprehensive emergency
14 alert strategy for protecting the lives and safety of San Francisco residents, workers, and
15 visitors, and that further delay in addressing this critical infrastructure gap is unacceptable.



City and County of San Francisco
Tails
Resolution

City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

File Number: 260142

Date Passed: March 03, 2026

Resolution urging the Department of Emergency Management and Department of Technology to prioritize the restoration of San Francisco's outdoor public warning system in tsunami evacuation zones and coastal areas, and to allocate funding for this critical public safety infrastructure.

February 24, 2026 Board of Supervisors - CONTINUED

Ayes: 11 - Chan, Chen, Dorsey, Fielder, Mahmood, Mandelman, Melgar, Sauter, Sherrill, Walton and Wong

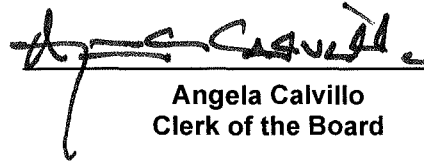
March 03, 2026 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 10 - Chan, Chen, Dorsey, Fielder, Mahmood, Melgar, Sauter, Sherrill, Walton and Wong

Noes: 1 - Mandelman

File No. 260142

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 3/3/2026 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.


Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

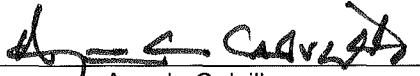
Unsigned

03/13/2026

Daniel Lurie
Mayor

Date Approved

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without his approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.



Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

03/13/2026

Date

File No. 260142