

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

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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.**

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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.

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