



State of California

California Emergency Management Agency
Earthquake and Tsunami Program

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Date: April 2, 2010
To: Scott Bakker, Captain
Deputy Commander, Air Operations, 105 South Coast Squadron
Brookings, Oregon
From: James D. Goltz, Ph.D.
Earthquake and Tsunami Program Manager
Subject: **CAP Speaker System**

Once again, I would like to thank you and your colleagues for participating in California's Live Code Tsunami Warning Communications Test on March 24. All of us, including representatives of the National Weather Service, the California Emergency Management Agency and the several participating jurisdictions in this year's test were impressed by the efficiency and professionalism demonstrated by you and the members of your team. As you know, the test we conduct each year in California employs "live" tsunami event codes in testing the Emergency Alert System. These live codes cause a message to be released over EAS affiliated radio and television stations indicating that "a tsunami warning has been issued for counties x, y and z." We conduct this test annually to assure that this final link in conveying a tsunami warning message to the public will work as intended in a real tsunami emergency.

Although the original intent of this test was, as indicated above, to test the Emergency Alert System, additional exercise elements have been added including tsunami siren activation, selective evacuations, reverse 911 calling and, during the last two years of testing, the Civil Air Patrol flyover using the CAP Speaker System. I must admit being somewhat skeptical at first that a message could be clearly and audibly conveyed above engine noise from an airplane. But we were quickly convinced that it not only worked very well but that has the potential to be a major warning asset in an actual tsunami emergency. In 2010, we asked that you expand the area in which the CAP Speaker system was used and you accommodated our request.

This morning, I reviewed the survey responses received from 152 people in the test area (Del Norte, Humboldt and Mendocino Counties as well as North Coast Tribes) and discovered that 52% (79 of 152) reported that their primary means of notification during the test was the CAPS Speaker System. Thus, the message from the aircraft outperformed the EAS system, which was the basic system we tested, as well as the sirens and the Reverse 911 calls.

The only disappointment that I would like to communicate to you about the CAPS Speaker System is that there are too few of them. Based on your report at the time of the test, there are only two CAP planes equipped with the speaker system. You have clearly demonstrated their value to us but to take full advantage of the CAP Speaker System in an actual tsunami emergency (i.e. the issuance of a Tsunami Warning for California) we would require the services of several speaker equipped planes to cover the entire California Coast. I hope that this memo will be an incentive for you to appeal for additional CAP Speaker System equipped planes through your chain of command and would like to extend an invitation to you to participate in next year's tsunami test which will expand to include all Bay Area counties in addition to the North Coast.