

Ocean Networks Canada to coordinate earthquake early warning system for B.C.

Submitted by Virginia Keast Mon, 2016-02-29 22:40

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Earthquake early warning receives a big boost in British Columbia today. Ocean Networks Canada (ONC), an initiative of the University of Victoria, will develop a regional earthquake early warning system for southern British Columbia, home to over 50% of the province's residents, with funding from the province.



Gathering to celebrate \$5 million investment in earthquake early warning (left to right): Dave Cockle, Oak Bay fire chief and President, BC Earthquake Alliance; The Honourable Naomi Yamamoto; Kate Moran, ONC President & CEO; and Don McRae, MLA for Comox Valley.

The Honourable Naomi Yamamoto, Minister of State for Emergency Preparedness, announced that \$5 million will go to Ocean Networks Canada (ONC) and their partners to ensure that communities have the best chance to protect themselves and find safety when a major earthquake occurs.

This funding enables ONC to expand its seismic sensor network on land, and importantly, on the seafloor off the coast, where large earthquakes occur. ONC will also coordinate a variety of regional data to be hosted on Oceans 2.0, its world-leading data management system that collects and archives vast amounts of diverse data, in real-time, from ONC instruments and infrastructure.

With an expanded sensor network and proven delivery system, ONC is uniquely positioned to bring together the right players to deliver a comprehensive earthquake early warning system in British Columbia. ONC's cabled observatories collect data from ultra-sensitive offshore and land-based seismic sensors, effectively monitoring seismic activity 24/7 from the Cascadia subduction zone where earthquake risk is high.

Collaborating with other agencies, including the British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Natural Resources Canada and the University of British Columbia, ONC will be able to monitor earthquakes from other risk areas as well.

Leveraging the capabilities of Oceans 2.0, ONC is currently developing a software platform that will deliver an alert to decision-makers within seconds of a major rupture. These vital seconds of warning will allow time to take protective actions, for example: shutting down gas lines, stopping trains and surgeries, and taking cover.

Ocean Networks Canada operates world-class ocean observatories off the west coast of British Columbia and in the Arctic for the advancement of science and the benefit of Canada. ONC cabled observatories collect data that help scientists and leaders make informed decisions about coastal earthquakes and tsunamis, climate change, coastal management, conservation and marine safety.

Quotes:

Kate Moran, President & CEO, Ocean Networks Canada ?

?This funding from the Province of British Columbia, along with support from key collaborators, is a welcome sign that earthquake early warning will soon become a reality. It is an important part of ONC?s vision, to use our knowledge and leadership to deliver solutions for science, society and industry. This earthquake early warning system means that BC communities at risk from major earthquakes, will be able to better prepare for, and build resilience to earthquakes.?

Benoît Pirenne, Director, User Engagement, Ocean Networks Canada ?

?This initiative is leveraging 10 years of world-leading ocean observing technology and data management experience. Two years ago, Canada?s Advanced Research & Innovation Networks (CANARIE) recognized this unique capacity and funded the building of a prototype earthquake alert system. With this additional funding, we can now take the system to an operational level.?

Learn more:

Supporting seismic science: BC Government [News Release](#)

WARN Natural Disaster Mitigation [Fact Sheet](#) (pdf)?

Related news:

- Earthquake preparedness progressing slowly but surely ([Globe and Mail/Canadian Press](#), 2 Feb 2016)
- New Android app could detect earthquakes ([Toronto Star/Canadian Press](#), 12 Feb 2016)
- BC invests \$5 million in earthquake early warning system ([Ottawa Citizen](#), 28 Feb 2016)

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