

MOTION

The Tomás Rivera Institute and Asian Pacific American Legal Center recently released a joint study titled "Disaster Preparedness in Urban Immigrant Communities: Lessons Learned from Recent Catastrophic Events and Their Relevance to Latino and Asian Communities in Southern California." The report was funded by the Ford Foundation.

The report finds that limited English proficient populations are not fully incorporated in disaster preparedness educational efforts and emergency response plans. This is shown by a lack of materials in language other than English that reflect the demographics of the service populations and a shortage of bilingual staff and emergency response volunteers.

The study looked at focus groups of Latino residents and two different Asian communities. One of the incidents that researchers studied was the response to the 1994 Northridge earthquake. Issues that arose in the course of study included a lack of trust for police officers and greater confidence in fire fighters and nonprofit disaster groups.

The report recommends the establishment of working groups to better connect government agencies with ethnic communities. The City's Human Relations Department and new Office of Immigrant Affairs are both resources that can assist with this process. LAFD's CERT program was also commended as a model for disaster preparedness.

Finally, the researchers encourage first responders to make it clear to the public that disaster relief is not conditional on immigration status. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 reports were received that some residents were turned away for services because they couldn't prove their legal residency status (many had lost papers in flood).

This report brings up a number of issues of interest to the City about to improve its emergency planning efforts. The recent 5.4 earthquake was a reminder that we must be prepared at all times for natural and other disasters. The fact that the City is diverse in the number of languages spoken and nationalities is a factor that needs to be considered.

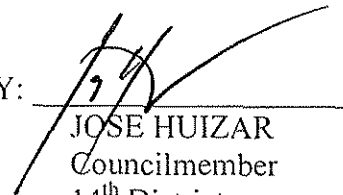
I THEREFORE MOVE that the The Tomás Rivera Institute and Asian Pacific American Legal Center be requested to present the findings of their "Disaster Preparedness in Urban Immigrant Communities" report to the City Council.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Emergency Preparedness Department, LAFD, LAPD, Human Relations Department and Mayor's Office be invited to share their thoughts on ways to ensure that all communities in the City are prepared for future disasters.

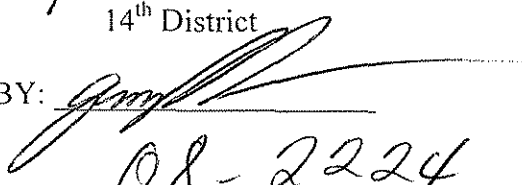


AUG 15 2008

PRESENTED BY:


JOSE HUIZAR
Councilmember
14th District

SECONDED BY:


08-2224