

California's Seismic Hazards Mapping Act  
**Mitigating Hillslope Hazards**  
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**Abstract**

California's Seismic Hazards Mapping Act of 1990 provides an effective means of mitigating hillslope hazards through improved land-use, design and construction decisions. State mandates to incorporate site-specific geotechnical hazard investigations as part of the local construction permit approval process provide a mechanism to identify when provisions beyond standard building codes are necessary to ensure safe development and reduce future losses. Although the act is chiefly aimed at reducing earthquake-related losses, provisions for slope stability can be applied broadly. Characteristics of landslide-prone terrain and measures taken to stabilize slopes are similar regardless of the triggering agent of slope failures. Successful implementation of the act is in unifying regulatory policy and process for hillside development. The act is also creating more consistent geotechnical information and higher standards for geotechnical practice. More importantly, lead agencies are embracing the act by establishing standards for review and approval of site investigations and mitigation proposals through expert ad hoc committees with multi-jurisdictional and multi-sector participation.