

# California tsunami warning system may be disbanded

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

Less than a year after surging waves from a Japanese earthquake battered the California coast, causing \$58 million in damage and wrecking the Santa Cruz and Crescent City harbors, the Obama administration is moving to reduce funding for the nation's tsunami warning and preparedness programs.

The White House's proposed 2013 budget would cut \$4.6 million from NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, for tsunami programs that were expanded after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that killed at least 230,000 people.

Among the proposed cuts: a reduction of \$1 million for America's network of 39 high-tech buoys in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. The buoys confirm if tsunamis are heading toward the

U.S. and provide crucial details such as the height of the waves and when they'll hit land.

Some of the nation's top tsunami scientists say the proposed cuts are too risky.

"Given how little money it is and the concerns about human life, this is a poor place to cut," said John Orcutt, a professor of geophysics at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla.

"It's just like large earthquakes," he said. "The half-life of attention is measured in shorter and shorter periods of time. Our memory isn't very long."

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