When the Big One Strikes Again—Estimated Losses due to a Repeat of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake

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The 1906 San Francisco earthquake and subsequent fires killed an estimated 3,000 people and left over half of the city's population homeless. Around 500 city blocks with 28,000 buildings were destroyed during this devastating natural catastrophe. The Earthquake Strikes San Francisco. At 5:12 a.m. on April 18, 1906, a foreshock hit San Francisco. However, it offered just a quick warning, for massive devastation was soon to follow. Approximately 20 to 25 seconds after the foreshock, the large earthquake hit. With the epicenter near San Francisco, the entire city was rocked. Chimneys fell, w The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, estimated to have a magnitude of 7.9, changed the history of California and indeed the whole nation. The earthquake and the associated fires caused about 3,000 deaths and 524 million in property damage. Much has changed since 1906. What would happen if an earthquake like that of 1906 were to happen today? Here I present results of an ongoing study of building damage and losses likely to occur due to a repeat of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, using the HAZUS technology. Recent work by Boatwright et al. (2006) provides estimates of spectral response acceler The study, "When the Big One Strikes Again," was released the day before the 100th anniversary of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. It was prepared for the three-day 100th Anniversary Earthquake Conference in San Francisco, which drew more than 2,500 scientists, engineers, government officials and emergency response professionals. The conference was one of a long list of events held around the Bay Area to commemorate the 1906 quake and promote earthquake preparedness. On April 18, survivors laid wreaths at Lotta's Fountain in downtown San Francisco to mark the moment the temblor struck shortl