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EDITORIAL: Earth shattering

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It's not going to be pretty when the Big One hits. That's one inescapable conclusion in a report from the District of North Vancouver made public this week — one of the most detailed studies ever done of the "What if" scenario in a West Coast earthquake.

The report lays out in impressive clarity which neighbourhoods will be hardest hit and what the long road to recovery will be like.

A 7.3-magnitude quake won't be cheap either. The report doesn't detail every cost, but getting bridges reopened or potable water flowing doesn't come cheap even when we're not in crisis.

The report provides a list of things we could be doing today to mitigate the damage and expedite the recovery, following a shallow quake in the Strait of Georgia — something that carries a 12 per cent risk over the next 50 years.

Some of these things, local governments have already done or are well on their way to doing. Others haven't been started or are out of the financial grasp of the municipality or school board (which has demonstrated Zen-like patience waiting for a rebuild of Argyle secondary.)

Our provincial and federal governments are also an important part of the equation en route to greater preparedness for natural disaster, given their jurisdiction and control over the major funding levers.

Putting up the money today won't just make it cheaper to contend with and recover from a major earthquake, it will alleviate the suffering and chaos experienced by those who endure it.

On the inevitable day when the ground begins to shake, our first thoughts won't be about how much money we've saved if we didn't do what was needed.

What are your thoughts? Send us a letter via email by clicking [here \(http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/send-us-a-letter\)](http://www.nsnews.com/opinion/send-us-a-letter) or post a comment below.

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