



TOWN OF

*Old Orchard Beach*

A FOUR SEASON COMMUNITY



December 16, 2013

Kerry Bogdan  
Senior Engineer  
Department of Homeland Security  
Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 1  
99 High Street, 6th Floor  
Boston, MA 02110

Dear Ms. Bogdan,

I recently sent you an email indicating my agreement with concerns expressed to you by Scarborough Town Manager Thomas Hall regarding the methodology used by FEMA in developing Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM's) for Old Orchard Beach and Scarborough. I have also been asked by representatives from the offices of Senator Susan Collins and Senator Angus King to communicate directly to you my concerns regarding the proposed FIRMs for Old Orchard Beach.

The Town's consultant, Robert Gerber of Ransom Engineering, has reviewed the preliminary maps for Scarborough and Old Orchard Beach and the associated modeling data. He has identified a fundamental concern that needs examination and explanation by FEMA before this process progresses further toward the appeal period and before Old Orchard Beach expends additional local money investigating this concern.

Mr. Gerber is of the opinion that FEMA did not use the same STWAVE model and wind velocities, and other inputs along Scarborough's and Old Orchard Beach's coast for determining incidental wave heights for calculating wave setup and wave run up as was used for other parts of York and Cumberland County. It is my understanding that one of the primary reasons FEMA suspended the introduction of FIRM maps in 2010 was incorporate the STWAVE model with the incidental wave height calculations provided by Ransom Consulting in order to generate more accurate base flood elevations. Based on Mr. Gerber's recent review it appears that other York and Cumberland County Towns (other than Scarborough and Old Orchard Beach) have benefited from the use of this same STWAVE model and its inputs. If this is the case the result of not using the same methodology in Scarborough and OOB is an approximate 2-foot higher base flood elevation than the likely results of using the STWAVE model used everywhere else. This could be contributing to a less accurate and an overly expansive 100-year flood zone on the Old Orchard Beach and Scarborough preliminary maps than is the case in other communities in Southern Maine.

I received a copy of your December 3 email response to a similar letter sent to you by Thomas Hall, the Scarborough Town Manager. I asked Mr. Gerber to review your response. After doing so he stands behind his conclusion that the modeling used by FEMA for Old Orchard Beach and Scarborough inappropriately uses different methodologies and inputs from that used in other Southern Maine locales to the disadvantage of scores of Old Orchard Beach property owners.

I request that you arrange for Mr. Gerber to speak directly to those in FEMA who did the modeling and calculations so that this important point can be addressed and responded to beyond that done in your December 3 email. I further request that this meeting be held early enough that the Town's concerns can be substantively responded to by FEMA prior to the beginning of the 90 day appeal process.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "L. Mead". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Larry S. Mead  
Town Manager  
Old Orchard Beach

Cc: Members of the Old Orchard Beach Town Council  
Jeffrey Hinderliter, Old Orchard Beach Town Planner  
Daniel Feeney, Old Orchard Beach Code Enforcement Officer  
Cathy Goodwin, State Office Representative for Senator Collins  
Bonita Pothier, Regional Representative for Senator King  
Thomas Hall, Town Manager, Scarborough, Maine  
Robert Gerber, Ransom Engineering