

MAR 05 2014



FEMA

The Honorable Susan M. Collins
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Collins:

Thank you for your letter dated January 28, 2014, to W. Craig Fugate, Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security, on behalf of your constituents in Cumberland and York Counties, Maine. In your letter, you requested that the previously accepted methodologies be applied to communities that did not leverage the use of engineering services with the first release of preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) in 2009. You also requested that the appeal periods for York and Cumberland Counties be delayed to allow affected communities time to review and improve the Flood Insurance Study (FIS) data.

FEMA considers a State and its local government partners when performing an FIS and invites these jurisdictions to participate at all stages of the development of the new or revised FIRM. Aligned with this intention, FEMA considers the FIRM a living document and encourages State and local partners to provide more precise, local data to be evaluated for use on a final FIRM. As noted in your correspondence, in 2009, FEMA was able to incorporate data from local sources for communities that submitted information determined to meet the appropriate requirements. FEMA is committed to providing an equal opportunity for data submittal for the communities involved in the ongoing Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning study and to ensuring that the evaluation process remains fair and transparent, consistent with both current FEMA Guidelines and Standards and the requirements outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Chapter I, Part 67. Guidance on submitting appeals is available at www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1813-25045-4679/eap_criteria.pdf.

FEMA is only able to incorporate additional enhanced analyses when communities, States, or other partners contribute such information. The previous data incorporations in 2009 are examples of successful coordination between FEMA and local stakeholders; other communities are encouraged to submit modeling information that improves the precision of the preliminary FIRMs during the appeal period. To help communities and their contractors understand the required data standards, FEMA Region I has met several times with communities in York and Cumberland Counties, either in person or on conference calls, and held webinars for local officials. These activities were designed to encourage communities to review the FIRM and provide feedback, to emphasize the need for those with detailed local knowledge to be part of the review process, and to explain technical approaches.

In the interest of allowing communities time for review, FEMA committed to deliver the technical data used in the FIS following the release of the preliminary FIRMs. As you noted in your letter, on January 8, 2014, FEMA's Region I office provided the technical data used in the creation of the preliminary FIRMs to the consultant working on behalf of several towns in Cumberland and York Counties. If additional communities are interested in requesting this technical data, they may contact

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Kerry Bogdan of the FEMA Region I office via email at Kerry.Bogdan@fema.dhs.gov or by telephone at (617) 956-7576.

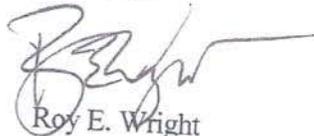
It is important to emphasize that the information shown on the preliminary FIRMs for Cumberland and York Counties is not considered finalized at this time. FEMA provides a formal opportunity for data submittal through the appeal period for those communities impacted by proposed changes to the FIRM during the revision process. The formal timeline for the start of the appeals period for York and Cumberland Counties is not yet finalized, and FEMA remains committed to coordinating with communities as the appropriate schedule is determined. If additional technically appropriate data are available from State or local sources, this information should be forwarded to FEMA for review. Information submitted for consideration should be coordinated with FEMA's Region I office in Boston via the contact information provided above.

Following the appeal period, if a community believes that the technical issues that were raised have not been adequately addressed, a Scientific Resolution Panel (SRP) can be made available to support the resolution process. SRPs are independent panels of experts in hydrology, hydraulics, and other pertinent sciences established to review conflicting scientific and technical data and provide recommendations for resolution. An SRP is an option after FEMA and a local community have been engaged in a collaborative consultation process without a mutually acceptable resolution. SRPs are made available only for submissions that meet the specific eligibility requirements outlined in FEMA Procedure Memorandum 58, *Implementing the Scientific Resolution Panel*.

FEMA also encourages communities to submit modeling information as it becomes available through other appropriate mechanisms, such as the Letter of Map Revision process, following an FIS in areas where FIRMs have been adopted as effective. In addition, residents can pursue amendments to the effective mapping information through the Letter of Map Amendment process. For more information on amending or revising the FIRM, please visit FEMA's website on the Letter of Map Change process at www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program-2/letter-map-change.

I hope this information is helpful to you in addressing the concerns of your constituents in southern Maine. If you need additional information or assistance, please have a member of your staff contact the FEMA Congressional Affairs Division by telephone at (202) 646-4500.

Sincerely,



Roy E. Wright

Deputy Associate Administrator for Mitigation
Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration

cc: Paul F. Ford, Acting Regional Administrator, FEMA Region I
Dean Savramis, Director, Mitigation Division, FEMA Region I
Jeb Killion, Congressional Affairs Liaison, FEMA Region I