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May 6, 2015

Regulatory Affairs Division
Office of Chief Counsel
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Re: Docket ID No. FEMA-2015-0006, Comments on the Draft *Guidelines for Implementing the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard*

Dear Office of Chief Counsel,

On behalf of the State of New Hampshire, the Office of Energy and Planning is submitting for your consideration comments on the draft *Guidelines for Implementing the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard* developed by the New Hampshire Coastal Risks and Hazard Commission, which includes representatives from the New Hampshire State Legislature, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning, the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources, and the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development, among other state, regional and local stakeholders.

In New Hampshire, we have experienced a number of significant flooding events in recent years and the new standard proposed by President Obama in Executive Order 13690 is a crucial step to improving our preparedness and resilience. The State of New Hampshire appreciates the opportunity to provide comments prior to the implementation of the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard. If you need additional information please contact Jennifer Gilbert, New Hampshire's National Flood Insurance Program Coordinator at 603-271-1762 or Jennifer.gilbert@nh.gov.

Sincerely,

Meredith A. Hatfield
Director

Enclosure: State Comments

COMMENTS TO THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
ON THE DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING
THE FEDERAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STANDARD

WHEREAS, New Hampshire faces increasing flood risk due to several factors including land use change, extreme precipitation, storm surge and sea level rise, it is imperative that its communities, agencies, institutions and businesses prepare for these conditions by creating greater resilience to flooding; and

WHEREAS, it is essential for communities to begin acting now to adapt to these projected conditions, and to do so using multiple measures, including resilient building, landscape and infrastructure design, protection and enhancement of natural shoreline features, and strategic shoreline protection or retreat; and

WHEREAS, creating more resilient communities, both in the built and natural environment, will help protect life, and property and economic vitality from the effects of future flood risk; and

WHEREAS, to establish greater resiliency, the design and construction of public infrastructure that is built or rebuilt from this point forward should anticipate future flood conditions to ensure that such investments are not subject to unnecessary damage or loss; and

WHEREAS, higher flood management standards will increase the short term capital costs for building and infrastructure, if the standards are reasonably established and based on sound science, they will also reduce the long term costs for maintaining, repairing and replacing buildings and infrastructure due to flood damage; and

WHEREAS, in 2013 the State of New Hampshire established a Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission (CRHC) under RSA 483-E to advise the state and its coastal municipalities on policies and actions with regards to increasing coastal flood hazards; and

WHEREAS, the New Hampshire Coastal Risks and Hazards Commission subsequently established a Science and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) to advise it on the expected sea level rise and other future flood hazards specific to New Hampshire based on the best currently available climate science, and that Panel issued its report in August 2014; and

WHEREAS, it is advisable to establish state and national standards for flood risk management to protect public investment in infrastructure, and to ensure consistency in planning and design across agencies and localities;

THEREFORE, the State of New Hampshire supports the establishment and implementation of new Federal Flood Risk Management Standards:

1. We affirm the need for a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) and support the proposed framework which allows flexibility in choosing the standard that will apply in specific circumstances (including the climate-informed science approach, the freeboard value approach and the 500 year flood elevation approach). We also support the inclusion of exceptions to the standards for certain emergencies, mission critical actions, national security concerns, and where application of the standard is 'demonstrably inappropriate'.

2. The FFRMS should incorporate the timeframe of anticipated increases in flood risk along with the design life and risk sensitivity of the facility or action being proposed to determine appropriate flood management standards.
3. The FFRMS should include periodic reevaluation of the standards to incorporate updated science based understanding and projections of sea level rise and other sources of flood risk.
4. Increased cost of project design and construction resulting from higher flood standards should be accommodated in the available federal funding for such projects.
5. Clear guidance should be provided for qualifying a state or region-specific 'climate science based standard' (such as the CRHC STAP report) into the FFRMS and clarifying under what circumstances higher state or local standards will take precedence over Federal standards.
6. Special attention should be given in the FFRMS implementing guidelines concerning how the standards will be applied to regulated actions pertaining to historic and archeological properties and sites.
7. The guidance to Federal agencies provided through FFRMS should seek to avoid the development of rules and standards that conflict when applied to projects that are subject to the jurisdiction of multiple agencies.