



FEMA

February 5, 2015

The Honorable John Thune
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thune:

Thank you for your request dated January 21, 2015, for a meeting with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security. As part of the South Dakota congressional delegation, you have expressed interest in the timely approval of the City of Sioux Falls' map revision request to reflect the effects and certification of the updated levee system along the Big Sioux River and Skunk Creek.

As I confirmed during our meeting on January 27, 2015, FEMA is working closely with the City of Sioux Falls to ensure the efficient progress of this mapping project. I am providing in this letter a more specific timeline for the progress of the map revision, which was initiated when FEMA received the city's request and data submittal on September 12, 2014. Since that time, FEMA has been reviewing the submittal and working to accurately depict the effects of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sioux Falls Flood Risk Reduction Project on 18 revised Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panels. FEMA is using the best terrain data available, base map information provided by the City of Sioux Falls, and new engineering analyses to map the updated flood risk areas along Skunk Creek and the Big Sioux River. FEMA plans to provide preliminary versions of the revised FIRM panels, plus an updated Flood Insurance Study report and a digital FIRM database, to community officials in June 2015.

After officials have had a chance to review these products, FEMA Regional Office staff anticipate scheduling a community coordination meeting in July 2015, to review and discuss the preliminary mapping products and begin a 30-day community comment period. After taking any appropriate actions resulting from comments received, FEMA will notify community officials by letter of an upcoming 90-day appeal period, which is required when flood hazard information is revised. This notification is expected to be delivered in September 2015, but FEMA will work earnestly to shorten this timeline whenever possible. FEMA will publish notices of the proposed flood hazard determinations in a local newspaper on two different dates, usually one week apart. FEMA will also publish a notice in the *Federal Register*. The appeal period will be initiated on the date of the second publication in the local newspaper.

During the regulatory 90-day appeal period, community officials and individuals affected by the revision will have the opportunity to submit technical and/or scientific data to support an appeal of the proposed flood hazard determinations. To resolve an appeal, FEMA may issue a resolution letter explaining why changes will not be made to the new or modified flood hazard information or may issue a new determination to effect the changes requested in the appeal. In either case, the community and appellants will have 30 days to review FEMA's determination and submit comments.

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After resolving any comments or appeals that are received, FEMA will issue a Letter of Final Determination. This action is currently scheduled for the spring of 2016. Up to six months are provided for the community's adoption of an updated floodplain management ordinance. Upon adoption by the community, the new FIRM panels may become effective; FEMA expects that to occur by the fall of 2016. FEMA is required to follow these procedures and will continue to work closely with community officials to ensure the expeditious movement through these steps.

Once the potential flood map revisions in Sioux Falls take effect, if insurance is no longer required because properties are no longer in the Special Flood Hazard Area, the owners of those properties may be eligible for a full refund of the flood insurance premium for the current policy term and for the previous policy term. However, flooding also occurs in areas of moderate or minimal flood hazards. Therefore, FEMA recommends flood insurance coverage, even if it is not required by law or a lender.

I hope this information is helpful to you. 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: Sharon Loper, Acting Regional Administrator, FEMA Region VIII
Jeanine D. Petterson, Director, Mitigation Division, FEMA Region VIII