

Early Notice and Public Review of a Proposed Activity in a Floodplain and Wetland

To: All interested Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

This is to give notice that the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA), as the Responsible Entity under 24 CFR Part 58, has determined that the following proposed actions under the Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Elevation, and Mitigation 2.0 (RREM 2.0) Program [CDBG-DR, grant number B-13-DS-34-0001] are located in the floodplain and wetland, and DCA will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the actions within the floodplain and wetland and the potential impacts on the floodplain and wetland from the proposed actions, as required by Executive Order 11988, Executive Order 11990, and in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands.

Superstorm Sandy made landfall in New Jersey on October 29, 2012, causing severe wind, storm surge, and rain, resulting in widespread flooding, particularly in coastal regions. The State of New Jersey received Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding for long-term recovery and mitigation efforts. \$1,356,543,202 was allocated to the Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Elevation, and Mitigation (RREM) program which assisted eligible homeowners of Sandy-damaged single-family primary residences to make homes livable and compliant with floodplain, environmental, and other requirements. DCA completed RREM Tier 1 EAs in 2013, covering the nine most impacted counties (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Union, Atlantic, Cape May, Monmouth, and Ocean). Under P.L.2025, c.319 Senate Bill S4812, approved January 20, 2026, DCA is resuming the RREM as RREM 2.0, allocating \$18,100,000 to address remaining unmet recovery and rebuilding needs of Sandy-impacted homeowners.

Since the Sandy Recovery Program Tier 1 EAs are more than five years old, new Tier 1 EAs are required to consider the environmental impacts of the RREM 2.0 program. Five counties overlapped with the Tropical Storm Ida programs (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, and Union). As the program scope for RREM 2.0 was similar to the Ida programs the environmental impacts were analyzed under a Tropical Storm Ida Tier 1 EA Re-evaluation, while Atlantic, Cape May, Monmouth and Ocean Counties did not overlap and are therefore being evaluated under separate EAs and under this notice. RREM 2.0 activities will be limited to reconstruction, rehabilitation, elevation, and other mitigation activities within the footprint of the existing developed lots for applicants whose homes were damaged by Superstorm Sandy.

Given the existence of floodplains and wetlands within Atlantic, Cape May, Monmouth, and Ocean Counties, it is assumed that some project activities will occur within or proximate to floodplains and/or wetlands. When required, homes will be elevated above the floodplain of concern elevation as identified on the best available floodplain maps in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.

The mapped acreage for the 100-year floodplain Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), the 500-year floodplain, and wetlands for each county is listed below. Project activities located partially or wholly within the SFHA will be required to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The NFIP requirement is not applicable to project sites located in Zone X or those outside of all SFHA floodplains.

Atlantic County- SFHA: 57,900 acres; 500-year floodplain: 2,440 acres; Wetlands: 136,470 acres
Cape May County- SFHA: 68,310 acres; 500-year floodplain: 8,220 acres; Wetlands: 85,230 acres
Monmouth County- SFHA: 28,830 acres; 500-year floodplain: 4,860 acres; Wetlands: 49,390 acres
Ocean County- SFHA: 102,220 acres; 500-year floodplain: 6,950 acres; Wetlands: 112,760 acres

The location of individual project locations in relation to the floodplain and wetland will be determined on a site-specific basis in subsequent Tier 2 reviews using the best available mapping data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to determine flood insurance, elevation, and mitigation needs.

No work will occur directly within wetlands, and best management practices for erosion and sedimentation control will be used to minimize potential indirect impacts. The proposed project will be limited to reconstruction, rehabilitation, elevation, and other mitigation activities within the footprint of the existing developed lots to assist eligible applicants whose homes were damaged by Superstorm Sandy to complete the necessary work to make their homes livable and compliant with floodplain, environmental, and other state and local requirements. The proposed project will maintain all natural and beneficial functions and intrinsic values of the floodplain and wetland including floodwater storage and conveyance, groundwater discharge or recharge, erosion control, water quality maintenance, and habitat for flora and fauna.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in the floodplain and wetland and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Commenters are encouraged to offer alternative sites outside of the floodplain and wetland, alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate project impacts on the floodplain and wetland. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplains and wetlands can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in the floodplain and wetland, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by DCA at the following address on or before August 30, 2026, Division of Disaster Recovery and Mitigation, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, 101 South Broad Street, PO Box 823, Trenton, NJ 08625 and 609-292-3750, Attention: Samuel Viavattine, Deputy Commissioner. Additional project information, including floodplains and wetlands maps for each affected county, can be viewed from 9 AM to 5 PM at the above address and <https://www.nj.gov/dca/ddrm/resources/environmental.shtml>. Comments may also be submitted via email at DRM.EHPComments@dca.nj.gov.

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