



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Engineering and Construction

Office of Flood Hazard Risk Reduction Measures

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CHRIS CHRISTIE

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Commissioner

April 19th 2016

Mr. John Bullard, Regional Administrator
National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries
Greater Atlantic Region Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

Re: Lead Agency Designation for Environmental Review and Invitation to be a Cooperating Agency in the Environmental Review Process for the Rebuild by Design Meadowlands Flood Protection Project in Bergen County, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Bullard:

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is conducting an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the Rebuild by Design (RBD) Meadowlands Flood Protection Project on behalf of the State of New Jersey as the recipient of Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under 42 U.S.C. 5304(g) and 79 Federal Register 62,182 (October 16, 2014). In accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, as Responsible Entity has designated NJDEP to be the Lead Agency for the environmental review process and preparation of the EIS. With this letter, the NJDEP also requests that the NOAA participates in the EIS review as a cooperating agency.

The RBD Meadowlands Flood Protection Project (the Project) would provide increased flood protection through construction of an integrated flood protection system and flood-reducing resiliency measures within the Boroughs of Little Ferry, Moonachie, Carlstadt, and Teterboro, and the Township of South Hackensack, Bergen County, New Jersey (Project Area). Such measures would be designed to address the impacts of coastal and riverine (fluvial) flooding on the quality of the human environment due to both sea level rise and storm hazards, including heavy rainfall events and intense coastal storm events. The approximate Project Area boundaries are: Hackensack River to the east; Paterson Plank Road and the southern boundary of Carlstadt to the south; State Route 17 to the west; and Interstate 80 and the northern boundary of the Borough of Little Ferry to the north.

The NJDEP secured the services of AECOM to carry this project through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, Feasibility Study and Construction oversight.

Currently the Notice of Intent (NOI) to conduct an EIS is under HUD review and is expected to be published in the Federal Register in June of 2016. The NOI currently lists 4 possible alternatives for his project: Alternative 1) This alternative consists of appropriate levees, berms, drainage structures, barriers, pump stations, floodgates, and/or other hard and soft infrastructure to achieve the required level of flood protection. Alternative 2) this alternative will analyze a series of projects that would function to reduce the occurrence of higher frequency, small- to medium-scale flooding events that impact the municipalities within the project area. Alternative 3) or the Hybrid Alternative, will include a strategic, synergistic blend of new infrastructure and local drainage improvements to reduce flood risk in the project area and, Alternative 4) The no-action alternative. This Project was originally developed and selected as a winning concept through HUD's RBD competition. HUD has allocated \$150 million in CDBG-DR funds for the planning, design, and implementation of this Project. If approved, construction of the Project is anticipated to begin in 2019 and will have been reviewed under NEPA and related laws in order to satisfy the requirements of 24 CFR Part 58. More project description is available at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/floodhazard/rbd-meadowlands.htm>

As a cooperating agency, you will be afforded the opportunity, together with the public, to be involved in commenting on the alternatives to be considered for the project. In addition, you will be asked to:

- Participate in the Scoping Process,
- Assume responsibility, upon NJDEP request, for developing information and preparing environmental analysis for portions of the EIS in which the NOAA has special expertise; and,
- Make staff available for interdisciplinary reviews.

Your agency has been identified as a potential cooperating, participating, or interested agency for the review of the RBD Meadowlands Flood Protection Project. If your agency consents to the NJDEP's serving as the lead agency for review under NEPA as per HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58 and will participate in the review as a cooperating agency, please indicate by signing this letter and returning it at your earliest convenience to Dennis Reinknecht , Program Manager, Office of Flood Hazard Risk Reduction Measures at the address above or at dennis.reinknecht@dep.nj.gov. If the NJDEP has not received a response from you within 30 day from this letter, your consent will be assumed.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dennis Reinknecht
Program Manager

cc:

Melissa Alvarez, PWS, Marine Habitat Resource Specialist, National Marine Fisheries Service, Habitat Conservation Division

Karen Greene, Marine Habitat Resource Specialist, National Marine Fisheries Service, Habitat Conservation Division

Jennifer Goebel, National Marine Fisheries Service, Protected Resources Division

This undersigned cooperating agency hereby consents to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection serving as lead agency for the Hudson River RBD described above.

National Marine Fisheries Service

By: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____