

NAFSMA UPDATE – August 16, 2017

President Signs Executive Order on Infrastructure Project Permitting – Includes Repeal of FFRMS

Following a meeting with top Administration officials in New York City today, including Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and Director of the National Economic Council Gary Cohn, President Trump this afternoon reportedly signed an Executive Order (EO) designed to streamline the permitting process for major infrastructure projects by establishing “one federal decision” for major projects and setting a two-year goal for permit. The approach will designate one leading agency for permitting on a project.

In a statement this afternoon, the President described his effort today as one of reforming the nation’s “badly broken process permitting process for infrastructure.” He noted that it took 11 months to build the Empire State Building and then went on to show a permitting process flow chart indicating it can take up to 20 years to get a highway project approved these days. He noted that if (a project) doesn’t meet environmental safeguards, we are not going to approve it.

In a statement from Secretary Chao this morning, she said, “For far too long, critical projects have been delayed by duplicative permitting and environmental requirements which added time and unnecessary expenses to much needed projects.”

Although the Executive Order has yet to be posted, White House officials have been reported to confirm that the revocation of President Obama’s January 2015 Floodplain Management EO that created the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) was included in the action. NAFSMA has commented to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on draft guidance and regulations developed by those agencies to implement the FFRMS. The President did not refer to the repeal of the FFRMS in his press briefing on today’s EO.

FEMA Seeks Comments on Draft Floodplain Development Policy

FEMA prepared a draft policy for FEMA staff and communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to update guidance for participating communities on satisfying NFIP floodplain development permit requirements, and to address questions about floodplain permitting of development activities occurring in the FEMA designated Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). Through this policy, a community can ensure compliance with NFIP and local floodplain management regulations, while potentially reducing the administrative burden associated with permitting certain types of low-to-no impact development in the floodplain.

This guidance does not intend to address other permits associated with building codes, or other federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial permits, and only applies to floodplain development permitting requirements to enroll in, and maintain eligibility for, the NFIP. The draft policy is available for review on FEMA’s website at: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/131010>, and the public is invited to provide comment and input via FEMA-Floodplain-Management-Division@fema.dhs.gov until **August 23, 2017.**

Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Application Period Now Open

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced yesterday that \$250 million in funding is available through two [Hazard Mitigation Assistance \(HMA\)](#) grant programs: Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) and Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM). These competitive grant programs assist state, local, tribal, and territorial governments in strengthening our nation's ability to reduce disaster losses and protect life and property from future disaster damages.

Flood Mitigation Assistance

The Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grant program provides funds available to implement measures to reduce or eliminate risk of flood damage to structures insured by the [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#). FMA grants are For FY 2017, \$160 million is available, including \$70 million for community flood mitigation activities that address flooding on a neighborhood level, such as floodwater diversion and localized flood-control measures as well as advance assistance for mitigation design and development of community flood mitigation projects. The remainder of funds will be used for mitigation planning, technical assistance and mitigating Severe Repetitive Loss and Repetitive Loss structures, which include elevation, acquisition, and relocation projects.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation

The Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program provides funds are awarded for all-hazard mitigation planning and projects, such as the construction of community and residential safe rooms for tornados, and wind retrofits, which are enhancements made to strengthen the roof, walls and doors of structures to minimize damage caused by high winds. This year, \$90 million is available, including \$10 million for federally-recognized tribes. States, territories and the District of Columbia may apply for the statutory allocation of up to \$575,000 federal share. The remainder of funds will be awarded on a competitive basis with an emphasis on mitigation activities that complement the post-disaster funding available under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and the flood mitigation funding from the FMA program.

As required in the [Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act \(Stafford Act\)](#), FEMA will provide the remainder of grant funding allocations to states and territories. These funds will be awarded on a competitive basis. FEMA's highest priority for competitive sub-applications is multi-state/tribal mitigation initiatives. In addition, FEMA's funding priorities are intended to avoid duplication of programs by providing pre-disaster funding to areas without post-disaster funding available through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP); and funding mitigation activities that cannot be funded by the FMA grant program.

The NOFO for FMA and PDM is available online at www.grants.gov and additional information is available at FEMA.gov. The FY2017 HMA application period opened on August 14, 2017. Eligible applicants must apply for funding through the Mitigation eGrants system on the FEMA Grants Portal accessible at <https://portal.fema.gov>. All applications must be submitted no later than 3 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on Nov. 14, 2017.

Further information on these grant programs is available at <http://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-assistance>.

EPA Launches Water Finance Clearinghouse, Including Stormwater Management Needs

On July 26th, the Center launched the Water Finance Clearinghouse, a web-based portal to help communities locate information to inform financing decisions for their drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure needs.

The Clearinghouse features two searchable data sets: one focused on available federal, state, and local funding sources for water infrastructure and the second contains resources, such as reports, tools, webinars etc. on financing mechanisms and approaches. It contains over 300 funding sources and 320 resources on stormwater and green infrastructure financing.

The Clearinghouse is updated in real-time, following a crowdsourcing model. States, federal agencies, and other water sector stakeholders have the ability to suggest edits, new resources, or funding options at any time through the Contributor Portal. Stakeholders can use this interactive feature to manage how their programs and initiatives are displayed in the Clearinghouse. To access more information on the Clearinghouse, go to <https://ofmpub.epa.gov/apex/wfc/f?p=165:1:.....>.



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