New Levee Analysis and Mapping Approaches

Talking Points for External Stakeholders

**Overview**

* As part of its effort to reform NFIP, FEMA is exploring more precise approaches for identifying flood hazards in areas impacted by levees.
* FEMA is replacing the approach currently used and developing alternative ways to analyze and map the flood hazards in areas impacted by levees.
* FEMA is working closely with USACE.
* **FEMA is *not* changing the requirements in 44 CFR 65.10.**
* We don’t have all the answers at this time. We are learning more as our effort moves forward and the process evolves and will share relevant information as we have it.

**The Process of Developing the Approaches**

1. FEMA has established a multidisciplinary **Project Team** with representatives from FEMA and USACE and experts from the academic and engineering communities.

The objectives of the Project Team are to:

* Explore a spectrum of possible approaches to address levees and the 1%-annual-chance flood
* Evaluate the approach scenarios
* Assess the feasibility and implementation of potential approaches
* Communicate the results and seek feedback from internal and external audiences.
1. The Project Team has reviewed levees throughout the nation to develop appropriate guidance and is preparing approaches for non-breaching, breaching and overtopping scenarios and check them for implementation feasibility.
2. Approaches that are feasible will be designated as “prototype methods” and tested for effectiveness in “proof of concept” case studies.
3. An Independent Scientific Board (ISB) made up of recognized experts convened by the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) will review and provide comments on the approaches.
4. FEMA will finalize guidance and make approaches available for public review and comment.

**Affected Communities**

* LFDs are on hold for communities impacted by non-accredited levees or levee systems that employ the current approach.
* Physical Map Revisions (PMRs) and Letters of Map Revision (LOMRs), in areas of non-accredited levees may be affected by this decision.
* For projects placed on hold awaiting the new guidance, it is difficult to determine when they will resume.
* While we want to move projects forward as expeditiously as possible, we want to take the necessary time to develop the new guidance and allow for public comment and the consideration of those comments before finalizing.
* Communities currently preparing required certification documentation or working to rehabilitate or construct improvements along their levee systems should continue their progress.

**Engagement with Communities**

* FEMA will engage with local communities and levee owners during development and implementation of the process.
* Local communities, and other interested parties are encouraged review and comment on the proposed guidelines and procedures during the public comment period we will provide.
* FEMA will continue to engage local communities while gathering available data about their levees.

**Levee Messaging about Risk**

* While mapping projects are on hold, flood risk behind levee systems exists and communities should communicate and manage these risks.
* Local communities should remain engaged in flood risk management activities while their mapping projects are on hold.
* Living with levees is a shared responsibility; and it's up to everyone to know their risk, know their role, and take action to reduce their risk.