

October 16, 2013

Paul Ford, Acting Regional Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Region I
99 High Street, Sixth Floor
Boston, MA 02110

**RE: Appeal of Base Flood Elevation Determination for Portion of
Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management
Agency's ("FEMA") Revised Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map
for Marshfield, Plymouth County, MA**
Community Name: Town of Marshfield
Community No.: 250273

Dear Mr. Ford:

On behalf of the Town of Marshfield, the Town of Marshfield Board of Selectmen and its residents (collectively "Marshfield"), I am hereby providing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) formal written notice of our appeal of the proposed Updated Preliminary FIRMs and FIS for Plymouth County and the proposed Base Flood Elevations determined therein specifically as it relates to Town of Marshfield in accordance with applicable regulations of the NFIP and the Guidance Document entitled "Appeals, Revisions, and Amendments to National Flood Insurance Program Maps: A Guide for Community Officials" dated December 2009 and published on January 13, 2010.

Pursuant to FEMA regulations, I have been appointed by the Marshfield Board of Selectmen, to submit appeals of the Updated Preliminary FIRM on behalf of the Town of Marshfield and find that the scientific and technical evidence presented is sufficient to justify an appeal in accordance with 44 C.F.R. § 67.6.

By way of brief background, the Town of Marshfield has a history of coastal flooding problems during major storm events as a result of its proximity to the ocean and the existence large tidal estuaries and rivers. FEMA has provided assistance to the Town of Marshfield and its residents on as many as seventeen (17) occasions in which the town or portions thereof were eligible for emergency disaster relief and has reimbursed property owners some on repeated occasion for flood damage. Without this essential aid, the Town of Marshfield and its residents would not have recovered and the fabric of this community would have

been forever altered. The Town of Marshfield is most appreciative of all of FEMA's efforts in the past and is cognizant of the mandate to FEMA to update and improve the accuracy of its FIRMs and flood data to ensure the future of the NFIP.

The Town of Marshfield, in this circumstance, is appealing to FEMA on equally critical issues affecting again the fabric of this community. If the BFEs are not corrected, a significant portion of the approximately 1300 homes and 95 commercial properties which are projected to be added to the expanded 100 year flood zones will be required to obtain flood insurance or pay more for insurance than they fairly should be required to pay. Amongst this affected area are also some of the Town of Marshfield's affordable housing developments, homes and apartments. The Town of Marshfield is greatly concerned that new and/or increased premiums resulting from the placement of these affordable homes and apartment into this flood zones will strain the ability of its most vulnerable residents, including the young and elderly, to meet their affordable housing costs.

By the inclusion of this information concerning the cost of flood insurance, the Town of Marshfield is asserting that the proposed Updated Preliminary FIRMs should not be implemented until after there is an assessment of the economic impact of the implementation of the proposed changes upon communities like the Town of Marshfield as required by the implementing legislation.

Based on the results of analyses along several Wave Transects¹ conducted by the international environmental, scientific, and engineering consulting organization known as The Woods Hole Group, Inc. (WHG), headquartered in Falmouth, Massachusetts as well as a result of information provided from certain town departments, officials and residents of the Town of Marshfield who have provided additional data to the Board of Selectmen and WHG, the Town of Marshfield is firmly of the opinion that the proposed BFEs determined by the FIS and shown in the proposed FIRMS is/are scientifically and/or technically incorrect.

In general and as further detailed in the attached narrative report and attachments, in WHG's opinion, the 2013 countywide FIS upon which the Updated Preliminary FIRMs are based uses the same SWLs used in an initial 2012 FIS. The 2012 FIS did not account for the actual change in datum resulting in an 8/10^{ths} of a foot reduction to SWLs. The Woods Hole Group used the corrected SWLs to determine the average slope for wave setup calculations using the approved DIM methodology, as well as the input for the 100-year SWL in CHAMP for determining revised BFEs in Plymouth County.

¹ WHG was unable to complete its evaluation of the remaining two transects in Marshfield as a result of timing issues; however, reasonably expects the same errors along the remaining two transects.

The Town of Marshfield also incorporates by reference the WHG's opinion that the use of a static TWL along each transect as shown on the proposed FIRMs is inconsistent with total water level based on actual data points from the 1978 100 year storm.

The further grounds for this appeal are detailed in WHG narrative report and attachments.

As a consequence of these errors, the Town of Marshfield is requesting that that FEMA withdraw the proposed FIRMS, redo the FIS with the correct BFE information at its cost and expense, issue new proposed FIRMS for review by Marshfield.

Alternatively, the Town of Marshfield is seeking that the proposed BFEs be corrected using the reports, data and analysis included and that the proposed Updated FIRMs and FIS be updated to reflect the correct BFEs in and for the Town of Marshfield.

FEMA is also advised that the Town of Marshfield has submitted independent appeals under separate cover supported by Ransom Consulting, Inc. that there were indisputable errors in the BFEs and also appeals by certain of its residents which have organized under the name the Marshfield Coastal Coalition.

If you have questions regarding this appeal, please contact M. Leslie Fields, M.S., at The Woods Hole Group, Inc. at (508) 540-8080 or you may contact me at the Town of Marshfield at (781) 834-5563.

Very truly yours,

Rocco Longo, Town Administrator
on behalf of the Town of Marshfield

cc: Brian Caulfield (via Hand-Delivery)
STARR
50 Hampshire Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
Brian.Caulfield@starr-team.com

Richard Zingarelli, NFIP State Coordinator
Flood Hazard Management Program
MA Department of Conservation & Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Ste 800
Boston, MA 02114
Richard.zingarelli@state.ma.us

Honorable William R. Keating
United States Congressman, 9th MA District
Plymouth Office
2 Court St.
Plymouth, MA 02360

Attachments: WHG Appeal including CD with digital file