



FEMA

January 4, 2013

Dear Community Official:

To assist in rebuilding efforts, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is providing Advisory Base Flood Elevation (ABFE) information to affected communities in coastal New Jersey and New York. Representatives from FEMA and the State have been holding ABFE briefing meetings for community officials to explain the materials and will be conducting webinars and open house meetings to further share the materials included in this package. You'll be hearing more from us soon regarding these arrangements.

Base Flood Elevations (BFEs), shown on many current Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), are based on studies performed more than 25 years ago. The ABFEs being provided to you represent the most up-to-date flood hazard information available for your community. The maps have been produced using updated coastal study methodologies, topographic data and leverage data from ongoing FIRM updates in these areas that were planned for release in summer 2013.

The enclosed ABFE maps are an interim product your community can use during reconstruction to ensure new structures and repairs to substantially damaged structures are protected to a level that minimizes future flood damages. Flood insurance premiums are lower for buildings in high-risk areas that are elevated above the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) minimum requirements. Additionally, communities that participate in the NFIP Community Rating System (CRS) Program can receive credit for adopting standards higher than the NFIP minimum requirements. This can result in premium discounts for policyholders in high-risk areas.

Although FEMA does not require communities to adopt the ABFEs, continued use of the flood data on the current effective FIRMs could result in structures that will be vulnerable to flood damage because they will not be built high enough or have the structural integrity to resist flood forces that may be encountered in future flood events. FEMA strongly encourages communities to adopt the ABFE maps by reference into their floodplain management ordinances. Formally adopting the ABFEs will provide your community with the legal authority to require their use.

The NFIP State Coordinator for New Jersey has drafted a model ordinance that includes ABFE adoption language and is available to provide further technical assistance to communities in adopting and implementing the ABFEs. This model ordinance has been included on the enclosed DVD.

We encourage you to share the enclosed ABFE maps and outreach materials with your community and to post the materials to your community website and/or provide a link to <http://www.region2coastal.com/sandy>, where additional information about ABFEs and their benefits to community rebuilding efforts is available. Through this website, the ABFE information can be viewed online via an interactive map or address lookup tool, with data available for download.

You may contact the NFIP Help Center for additional information at 1-800-427-4661. Alternatively, you may post questions regarding the use of the ABFE information and/or floodplain ordinances for your community to the [online form](#) provided at <http://www.region2coastal.com/sandy>. If you do post a question to the online mailbox, a member of my staff or your NFIP State Coordinator will contact you.

Sincerely,



Timothy P. Crowley  
Director, Mitigation Division  
FEMA Region II

Enclosures: DVD including map files, outreach materials, and model ordinance  
ABFE hard copy maps

cc: Community Floodplain Manager  
Community Building/Zoning  
Community Public Works  
Community Planning  
Community Office of Emergency Management  
Mr. John H. Moyle, PE, CFM, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
Mr. Ryan Pietramali, FEMA Hazard Performance and Assessment Group Supervisor, Joint  
Field Office