



ALLEGANY COUNTY, MARYLAND

The Board of County Commissioners

701 Kelly Road
Cumberland, MD 21502
T 301-777-5911 F 301-724-6970
www.alleganygov.org

Jacob C. Shade, *President*
Creade V. Brodie, Jr.
David J. Caporale

Brandon S. Butler, *Esq.*, *County Administrator*
William M. Rudd, *Attorney*

March 14, 2019

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin, Senator
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher J. Van Hollen, Jr., Senator
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David J. Trone, Congressman
Longworth House Office Building, Room 1213
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Cardin, Senator Van Hollen and Congressman Trone:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is responsible for updating the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for every county in the State of Maryland. FIRMs are transitioning from a paper product to a digital conversion. The improvements in spatial accuracy provided by the new base maps and the availabilities of electronic floodplain information will greatly enhance the ability to use the maps for planning, permitting, and insurance applications.

The process started eight years ago in 2011 when FEMA provided the first round of preliminary maps to the County for review. The maps were deemed grossly inaccurate due to inaccurate contour data used in the model. The preliminary maps were then revised with better contour data and released as a generally accurate product in 2015; however, the project experienced a number of lengthy delays related to priority and funding issues and certification of levees. Currently, Allegany County is one of three jurisdictions still waiting on new effective flood maps. The target effective date for the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs) is now April 2020, delayed most recently from April 2019.

While Allegany County will be very pleased to have flood maps that are more accurate and in a helpful digital format, the nine-year process has been nothing short of burdensome for many stakeholders. There are countless properties that are currently in the mapped floodplain and required to have flood insurance, yet are deemed out of the floodplain on the new maps. These property owners have continued to pay for flood insurance for many years, knowing that the more accurate models predict they are not actually at that level of flood risk. In other cases, properties that are currently out of the mapped floodplain will be in the mapped floodplain on the

new maps. These property owners may not realize they are at risk and should have flood insurance to protect them.

In addition to insurance rates being affected, the lengthy transition has also caused unnecessary costs and/or delays related to development projects in Allegany County. For example, property owners in the current mapped floodplain who are not in the proposed mapped floodplain may wish to improve their property but have been waiting for many years for the new maps to become effective so that unnecessary costs related to permitting and flood insurance would not need to be incurred. Some real estate transactions have also been delayed and possibly abandoned due to the uncertainty of changing flood risk.

We are committed to supporting our citizens in the development of their properties, which will contribute to a sustainable economy. In order to do so, we are seeking support from our partners at the state and federal levels to ensure that these maps achieve an effective date no later than the current target of April 2020.

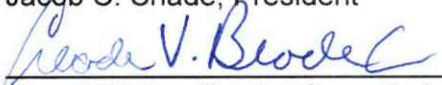
Please join us in taking every opportunity you have to express the importance of this issue to our state and federal partners so that no further delays are experienced. To discuss further, please contact Angie Patterson, Director of Planning & Growth, at apatterson@alleganygov.org or 301-876-9509.

Sincerely,

The Board of County Commissioners



Jacob C. Shade, President



Creade V. Brodie, Jr., Commissioner



David J. Caporale, Commissioner

- cc: The Honorable George C. Edwards, State Senator
- The Honorable Wendell R. Beitzel, State Delegate
- The Honorable Jason C. Buckel, State Delegate
- The Honorable Michael W. McKay, State Delegate