

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 15, 2024

The Honorable Deanne Criswell
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Administrator Criswell,

We write today to support ongoing efforts to update and modernize flood maps for coastal communities in Mississippi. Since the previous maps were implemented, there have been significant changes to the coastline and breakthrough technological advancements. We support the Mississippi Coastal Map Revision Project's (MCMRP) aim to create more accurate and reliable flood risk management data for our constituents, and we appreciate your commitment at a recent Transportation and Infrastructure Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management Subcommittee hearing to ensure these updates are included appropriately. This project is critical to the economic stability and development of Gulf Coast communities and the entire State of Mississippi.

In 2016, the Mississippi State Legislature provided funding for the creation of the Physical Map Revision of the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM) for the coastal counties in Mississippi. This funding has been allocated to the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources in collaboration with the Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District (SMPDD).

Since the most recent adoption of the DFIRM in 2009, there have been significant changes to the coastal landscape, along with advancements in hydrodynamic modeling and data sources. Given these developments, the State of Mississippi has made it a top priority to revise these maps in congruence with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) guidelines. To meet this goal, SMPDD has worked with experts in the field of flood mapping, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Engineer Research and Development Center, Louisiana State University, the University of Notre Dame, and Michael Baker International. These national experts in FEMA coastal flood risk studies have used the latest available data, science, and engineering methods to develop the most accurate flood maps for Mississippi's coastal communities. Such improvements are necessary for local leaders to make informed decisions about their

communities' growth and development. It is our understanding that Intermediate Data Submittal (IDS) #5 has been completed by SMPDD's team and subsequently submitted as an MT-2 Application through the FEMA online Letter of Map Change portal on March 11, 2024. We hope your office will take steps to guarantee a timely review of the submitted package and perform the review as a single submission for the entire Mississippi coast – not as 15 individual studies representing each community.

FEMA has provided continuous support to this study by facilitating detailed milestone Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) reviews of IDS #1-4 by COMPASS PTS Joint Venture (COMPASS JV), who are the mapping partners at FEMA Region IV. The SMPDD study team worked with COMPASS JV to ensure that their comments were addressed and resolved. The ongoing collaboration between SMPDD and FEMA ensures that the program remains aligned with regulations and uses the latest scientific and technological advancements.

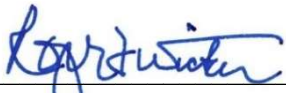
Consequently, we request the agency leverage the expertise of the COMPASS JV reviewers who conducted QA/QC of the previously submitted IDS #1-4 to expedite the MT-2 application approval process.

We understand FEMA Region IV has been made aware of this project on several occasions, including continuous milestone updates and schedule progression. Additionally, we support continued cooperation regarding this project, including review of the IDS #5 data and report, development of preliminary maps, community outreach, publication of appropriate regulatory documents, and production of new DFIRMs. Timely and effective coordination between the FEMA Region IV Office, COMPASS JV, and the SMPDD project team are essential to ensure expeditious completion of this project.

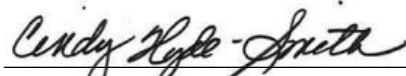
In summary, we request that your office:

- Capitalize on the past IDS reviews to expedite processing and maintain continuity with the same review team (COMPASS JV).
- Process the Letter of Map Change portal community applications as one (1) project and not as individual communities. We support bundling the applications into three (3) county groups, if necessary.
- Ensure adequate funding has been appropriated for the review and processing of this project through completion.
- Ensure timely and effective coordination between the FEMA Region IV team, SMPDD, and the MSCMRP team throughout this process.

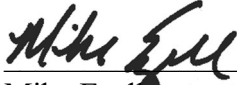
We appreciate your support for the State of Mississippi's efforts in developing their own Physical Map Revision and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.



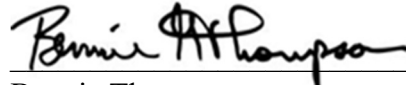
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United States Senator



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