



§ 67.5 Right of appeal.

(a) Any owner or lessee of real property, within a community where a proposed flood elevation determination has been made pursuant to section 1363 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, as amended, who believes his property rights to be adversely affected by the Administrator's proposed determination, may file a written appeal of such determination with the CEO, or such agency as he shall publicly designate, within ninety days of the second newspaper publication of the Administrator's proposed determination.

Applying Technology to Streamline the FEMA Flood Map Appeals Process: A Case Study

Samara Ebinger, CFM, Dewberry

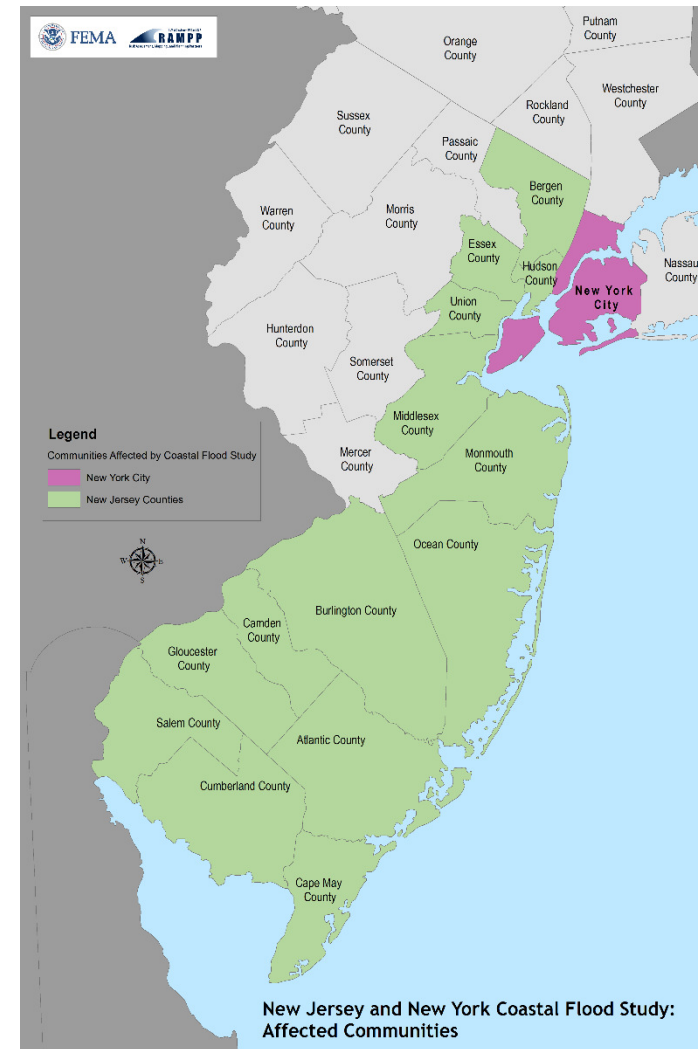
- [illegible]

FEMA's Appeals Process, cont.

- 90-day appeal period following issuance of preliminary FIRMs
- Appeals must include scientific/technical data and be received during the appeal period
- Submittals must be reviewed by community officials
- Comments – submittals that:
 - Do not meet data requirements
 - Are received outside of appeal period
 - Pertain to non-flood hazard elements of FIRM/FIS

Region II Coastal Flood Study

- Revised coastal modeling and topographic data
- 285 communities along NJ/NY Atlantic coast, including New York City
- Significant changes in flood hazards since effective FIRMs produced
- Large population affected
- High value real estate



Why a web application?

- Size and visibility of project
- Concurrent appeal period for all communities
- Allow FEMA and support contractors to effectively track and respond to submittals
- Desire for efficiencies to reduce the manpower/effort needed to manage the process
- Make the process easier for everyone involved

‘Appeal Portal’ Development

- Aggressive schedule to ensure rollout by the start of the appeal period
- FEMA Regional and HQ team involved in requirements development
- SQL Server
- Server side component: .Net Framework (C# and WCF Web Services)
- Client side component: Asp.Net, ESRI Javascript API, Flat UI, jQuery



Portal Benefits: Member of the public

- Submit appeals and comments online
- Step-by-step guidance on what needs to be submitted
- Automated email notifications at each step in process
- Submit additional data or comments on resolution letters online
- Check status of their request at any time

Application Demonstration

The screenshot displays the FEMA Preliminary Flood Map Feedback Portal. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Header:** FEMA logo, "Preliminary Flood Map Feedback Portal", and user information "User: SEbinger123" with a "Sign Out" link.
- Left Panel:**
 - Refine your area of concern:** Instructions for refining the area of concern, including zooming and drawing.
 - Instructions:** A numbered list of steps for using the map.
 - Map:** A map showing flood risk zones (Zone A in green, Zone AE in blue) and geographical features like "Township of Egg Harbor City of Absecon" and "Absecon Bay".
 - Flood risk legend:** A legend indicating Zone A and Zone AE.
- Right Panel:**
 - Login or Register to Leave Feedback:** A "Register/Login" button.
 - What Is the Purpose of This Site?:** An "Overview" button.
 - More Questions?:** A "FAQ" button.
 - Helpful Documents and Websites:** A "Resources" button.
- Bottom Section:**
 - What is your concern with the preliminary FIRM/FIS report about?:** A dropdown menu with options: "My concern is about the following information shown on the preliminary FIRM/FIS report:", "New/updated flood hazard information", "Other map or report features besides flood hazard information", and "Both new/updated flood hazard information and other map/report features".
 - Navigation:** "View Tutorial Video", "Previous", and "Continue" buttons.



Portal Benefits: Community Officials

- Submit appeals and comments online
- Step-by-step guidance on what needs to be submitted
- Automated email notifications at each step in process
- Submit additional data or comments on resolution letters online
- ***Review and comment on all submittals from members of the public***
- ***Check status of any/all requests that affect their community***



Portal Benefits: FEMA and Support Staff


- Automated acknowledgment letters eliminate the need to create and issue manually.
- Easy access to complete submittals to help facilitate the review process – central repository/record of each submittal, issued correspondence, milestone dates.
- Email notifications at each step in the process keep the entire team informed of status and action items.
- Ability to download status reports based on the latest information.

Pending Items

FEMA/Community Official Dashboards

Submission Summary

Actions

 **FEMA**

Preliminary Flood Map
Feedback Portal

User: SamaraEbingerRE
Sign Out

Submittal ID: 1548

Status: Resolution Letter Issued

View All Submissions

Stakeholder


First Name: [REDACTED]
Last name: [REDACTED]
Mailing Address: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Submittal

Date Created: 2015-04-16
Date Last Edited: 2015-04-16
Location Concern Type: One or more areas in a single community
Location: TOWNSHIP OF LOWER, CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY
Initial Data Upload: [REDACTED]
Additional Data Requested: [REDACTED]
Additional Data Uploaded: [REDACTED]

Map

(Note: Zoom to see preliminary map flood hazard areas.)



Select action...

Continue

Results

- Appeal period has ended for the study
- 170 submittals received
- Currently working to resolve appeals/comments
- Feedback from both internal/external stakeholders has been very positive
- Portal continues to be used by FEMA team as resolution of appeals/comments continues



Next Steps

- Plans to discuss future uses of the tool for other Region II projects or beyond
- Similar web applications may be useful to support other processes/programs
 - Track LOMR submittals
 - States/CTPs
 - Other public comment periods for other types of projects outside of the NFIP or FEMA

Questions?

- Check out the Portal at www.region2coastal.com/appeal
- Samara Ebinger
(sebinger@dewberry.com)

