U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region I
99 High Street, 6th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

FEMA

April 9, 2014

Prelim-EAP-R1

The Honorable Robert J. Lister
City of Portsmouth
Portsmouth City Hall
1 Junkins Ave.
Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801-4511

Community Name: City of Portsmouth
Rockingham County
New Hampshire
Community No.: 330139
Panels Affected: See FIRM Index

Re: Updated Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and Updated Preliminary Flood Insurance Study (FIS) Report for Rockingham County, New Hampshire

Dear Mayor Lister:

We are pleased to present your community with copies of the Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) and Flood Insurance Study (FIS) report for the City of Portsmouth, Rockingham County, NH for your review and comment. These preliminary documents represent a new coastal study that was conducted in your county, using updated methodology and 2-foot topographic data obtained through Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR). The purpose of this effort is to provide your community with updated flood hazard risk information that can be utilized for mitigation actions and planning in order for your community to become more resilient to flood hazards.

You will find enclosed a DVD with the flood hazard information for Rockingham County as updated by this Preliminary issuance. In addition to the DVD, a hard copy of your community's Preliminary coastal FIRM panels and FIS report were forwarded to your community's Floodplain Administrator. We have also provided a hard copy set of FIRM panels to Jennifer Gilbert, your State National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Coordinator, whose contact information is provided at the end of this letter.

The flood hazard information presented on the FIRM includes Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs), which are the areas that would be inundated by the flood having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year, known as the base flood; as well as the corresponding Base Flood Elevations (BFEs). There are also regulatory zones in coastal areas identified as "VE Zones". These areas have been identified using National Academy of Sciences (NAS) methodology to delineate areas subject to wave heights of 3 feet or greater. In addition, these updated panels will depict a "Limit of Moderate Wave Action" (LiMWA), which represents the region subject to the limit of wave heights between 1.5 to 3 feet. The LiMWA is currently a non-regulatory demarcation on the map, but is meant to convey the risk associated with a 1.5-foot wave, which has been found through post-event damage assessment surveys to have the potential to cause substantial damage to structures built in compliance with A Zone standards. Although the LiMWA currently holds no higher building regulation requirements in the State of New Hampshire, FEMA's Coastal Construction Manual encourages building practices in these areas of increased risk follow V Zone standards.

Your community should note that there may be additional non-coastal areas where the SFHA has changed due to new studies or the use of more precise topographic data. In areas where there were no additional studies or information, the currently effective digital SFHA was incorporated onto the new base map. This work was conducted by FEMA's mapping contractor, the University of New Hampshire. Please note that the BFEs will be listed in the North American Vertical Datum (1988), which may be different from the datum used in previous flood studies.

We are sending the Preliminary copies at this time to give your community an opportunity to review them. Additionally, in an effort to assist you in circulating the information, FEMA has posted digital copies of the FIRM and FIS report materials to the following website: **www.fema.gov/preliminaryfloodhazarddata**.

We are working with your State NFIP Coordinator to schedule a community coordination meeting (a "Consultation Coordination Officer [CCO]" Meeting). The purpose of this meeting will be to present the results of the study, discuss the information presented on the Preliminary FIRM and FIS report, discuss their impact on your community's participation in the NFIP, and give your community a chance to comment or ask questions. In the meantime, we strongly encourage you to thoroughly review the enclosed copy, and circulate it as widely as possible among elected officials, staff, and other individuals or organizations in the community that would have an interest in the FIRM and FIS report, so that they will also have the opportunity to review them thoroughly before the formal community coordination meeting. We will contact you once this meeting has been scheduled. The meeting will be at least 30 days after the issuance of this letter.

This review period also provides your community with an opportunity to identify changes and corrections to non-technical information. These may include corporate limits, road names, bridges, stream names, etc. on the FIRM or in the FIS report. Please send comments to Alex Sirotek at the Regional Service Center, 99 High Street, 3rd Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02110. We will consider all comments and changes received during this period and will incorporate them, as appropriate, before the FIRM and FIS report become effective.

To assist your community in maintaining the FIRM, we have enclosed a Summary of Map Actions (SOMA) to document previous Letters of Map Change (LOMCs) (i.e., Letters of Map Amendment [LOMAs], Letters of Map Revision [LOMRs]). We reviewed our records for any previous LOMCs (i.e., LOMAs and LOMRs) for your community. The SOMA reflects the LOMCs found in our records for your community. Please compare your records with this SOMA list, to ensure that we have included all LOMCs that you have in your files.

Information on LOMCs is presented in the following four categories:

(1) LOMCs for which results are shown on the FIRM;

(2) LOMCs for which results could not be shown on the FIRM because of scale limitations. However, these LOMCs are still valid. LOMCs in Category 2 will be revalidated through a single letter that reaffirms the validity of previously issued LOMCs; the letter will be sent to your community shortly before the effective date of the FIRM and will become effective one day after the FIRM becomes effective.

(3) LOMCs for which results are being superseded by new or revised flood hazard information. These LOMCs will not be revalidated and the community floodplain manager should notify the property owners.

(4) LOMCs listed in Category 4 are not revalidated. FEMA will, however, review existing and/or new data to make a determination for the affected properties after the FIRM becomes effective. The community floodplain manager should notify property owners that they must reapply for the LOMC determination after the FIRM becomes effective. FEMA will then respond to their application with a determination, which will be sent to both the applicant and the community.

After the CCO Meeting, a statutory 90-day appeal period is required when FEMA adds or modifies BFEs, base flood depths, SFHAs, flood zone designations, or regulatory floodways within a community, as shown on the Preliminary FIRM. We will send you a letter approximately 2 weeks before the start of the 90-day appeal period to detail the appeal process. The letter will forward information regarding notifications to be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER and local newspaper(s) and will provide the first and second publication dates. The

appeal period will start on the second publication date. Additional information concerning the 90-day appeal period will be provided during the CCO Meeting.

All comments and appeals received through the end of the 90-day appeal period will be considered and incorporated as appropriate. Following the resolution of all comments and appeals, FEMA will issue a Letter of Final Determination (LFD). When FEMA issues the LFD, the community must adopt the new FIRM panels and FIS within 6 months in order to remain in good standing with the NFIP.

The new FIRM and FIS report for your community will become effective 6 months after the LFD date. Before the effective date, you will be notified in writing of the official FIRM and FIS report effective date and asked to adopt floodplain ordinances or modify existing ordinances as necessary that correspond with the new FIRM or FIS report. If you or other community officials have any questions regarding floodplain ordinances, you may raise them with our FEMA Regional Office or you may discuss those issues with your State NFIP Coordinator. Several months before the effective date, we will mail one set of printed copies of the finalized FIRM and FIS report and digital copies of the map and report products.

Your community's comments on the Preliminary FIRM panels and FIS report are an important part of our mapping process, and we will consider them carefully before we publish the FIRM and FIS report in their final form. If you have any questions regarding the Preliminary copies of the FIRM and FIS report, please contact John Grace, CFM, the FEMA Coastal Engineer designated for your community, at (617) 832-4715 or by email at John.Grace@fema.dhs.gov. If you have any questions regarding the necessary floodplain management measures for your community or the NFIP in general, we urge you to contact Jennifer Gilbert, New Hampshire State NFIP Coordinator, at (603) 271-2155 or by email at Jennifer.Gilbert@nh.gov.

Sincerely,

Richard Verville, Chief
Hazard Mitigation Assistance Branch
FEMA Region I

State NFIP Coordinator's Contact Information:
Jennifer Gilbert, CFM, State NFIP Coordinator
New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning
107 Pleasant St.
Johnson Hall
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Phone Number: (603) 271-2155
Email: Jennifer.Gilbert@nh.gov

Enclosures:
DVD of Preliminary FIRM, FIS report, and SOMA

cc: Richard Hopley, Building Inspector, City of Portsmouth (hard copy and DVD)
John Bohenko, City Manager, City of Portsmouth (w/o enclosures)
Rick Taintor, Planning Director, City of Portsmouth (w/o enclosures)
Peter Britz, Environmental Planner, City of Portsmouth (w/o enclosures)
John Grace, CFM, Coastal Engineer, FEMA Region I (hard copy and DVD)
Jennifer Gilbert, CFM, State NFIP Coordinator, NH Office of Energy and Planning (hard copy and DVD)
Alex Sirotek, Regional Service Center, STARR Region I (w/o enclosures)
Fay Rubin, Project Manager, University of New Hampshire (w/o enclosures)