



2005 Market Street, Suite 1700 215.575.9050 Phone
Philadelphia, PA 19103-7077 215.575.4939 Fax

901 E Street NW, 10th Floor 202.552.2000 Phone
Washington, DC 20004 202.552.2299 Fax
www.pewtrusts.org

March 17, 2017

Mr. Gary D. Cohn
Director, National Economic Council
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Cohn:

On behalf of The Pew Charitable Trusts, we are writing to urge the Administration to support and preserve a critical infrastructure policy that enhances public safety, ensures long-term fiscal responsibility, and promotes flood-prepared communities. Executive Order 13690, the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS), is a common sense approach to guiding federal spending for new construction and repairs of public infrastructure. We understand the Administration may be considering repeal of this policy, and we offer our strong caution against undoing this important standard to enhance public safety and save taxpayer dollars.

As the Government Accountability Office reports, 90 percent of all natural disasters in the United States involve flooding, claiming lives, inflicting financial losses on households and businesses, and straining the resources of government agencies that provide flood response and relief. From 1980 to 2013, flooding cost Americans more than \$260 billion in damages.

Again and again, the federal government has been called upon to provide disaster aid, not only to rescue and house victims and deliver water and crucial supplies, but also to repair or replace schools, community centers, roads and bridges, water treatment plants, and other infrastructure. The result is a wasteful cycle of loss and rebuilding and an ever-growing financial burden on taxpayers. The FFRMS can help break that cycle.

The FFRMS establishes a prudent standard for federal investments in new construction or major repairs to infrastructure. It does not restrict investments in flood-prone areas but requires that those investments be made with practical and long-term consideration of the flood risks. It assures that limited federal funds go toward projects that are sited, designed, and constructed to withstand future floods. By making flood-smart investments now, the federal government can help the nation meet its future infrastructure needs while greatly cutting the expense of post-storm rebuilding down the line.

Pew urges the Administration to preserve and support this policy that reduces Americans' exposure to flood risk, wisely stewards taxpayer dollars, and ensures the durability of our federal investments.

We appreciate your consideration of these comments, and welcome an opportunity to discuss the specifics of the FFRMS with your team. I can be contacted at llightbody@pewtrusts.org or (202) 552-2156 or Velma Smith, government relations can be contacted at vsmith@pewtrusts.org.

Sincerely,



Laura Lightbody
Director, Flood-prepared communities
The Pew Charitable Trusts