



April 26, 2017

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security,
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security,
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Roybal-Allard:

As your committee considers funding levels for fiscal year 2018 (FY18) Homeland Security appropriations legislation, The Pew Charitable Trusts urges investment in key federal programs that help create flood-prepared communities.

Flooding caused more than \$260 billion in damages in the U.S. from 1980 to 2013, making it the costliest and fastest-growing disaster threat in the nation. In order to understand, manage, and reduce flood risk, we encourage you to fund the following core programs at no less than the FY16 appropriated levels:

- **\$100 million for FEMA National Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program**
 - Common Appropriations Structure – Homeland Security, FEMA, Federal Assistance, National Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program: \$100 million

- **\$313 million for FEMA Flood Risk Mapping**
 - Common Appropriations Structure – Homeland Security, FEMA, Federal Assistance, Risk Mapping: \$190 million
 - Common Appropriations Structure – Homeland Security, FEMA, National Flood Insurance Fund, Risk Mapping: \$123 million

These investments strengthen the ability of communities to plan and prepare for future disasters by providing critical flood hazard information and helping state and local governments act to reduce risks from flooding.

FEMA National Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program: The National Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM) provides competitive and formula grants to states, territories, federally-recognized tribes, and local communities to reduce overall risk to the population and structures from future events. Smart planning and preparation before a catastrophic storm is a critical investment that can help to both protect property and people as well as reduce the costs of emergency response and recovery. Grants are awarded for projects such as retrofitting existing facilities for wildfire, seismic, wind, or flood hazards, construction of safe rooms, voluntary relocation of hazard-prone dwellings, and other preparation measures.

As the number of disaster declarations has risen over the years, so too have associated costs. PDM grants are one of the key federal resources available to communities prior to a disaster, and demand for project funding from state and local communities far surpasses available funding. Historically, annual average funding levels have exceeded \$100 million, but since 2010, that has dropped by nearly half. The FY16 appropriation was an

important increase and should be continued. Economic analysis indicates that every \$1 invested to reduce risk from disasters, saves the nation an average of \$4 in emergency response and recovery.

Pew urges the committee to provide no less than \$100 million in FY18 for the FEMA National Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program.

FEMA Flood Risk Mapping: FEMA's flood maps are the nation's way to identify flood risk areas and serve as the basis for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements. Up-to-date and technically credible flood maps are essential to understanding, avoiding, and minimizing the risk of damages and loss of life. These maps are used within the insurance program and are partially paid for directly from insurance premiums. They are critical for more than NFIP policy holders, however. The maps allow states and local communities to promote growth and development in areas least likely to flood, are used by engineers, transportation planners, and others to identify priority areas for enhanced flood protection, help emergency personnel respond to flooding, and serve as a guide for recovery post storm.

While the techniques for developing flood maps have improved over the years, many still do not meet FEMA's current engineering standards. Some communities rely on cumbersome paper maps, and others have not been updated for decades, while newly developed areas have none at all.

The Association of State Floodplain Managers and a group of nationwide experts have recommended a total annual funding level of \$400 million to effectively serve unmapped areas and provide reliable updates to the more than 22,000 communities participating in the NFIP. Pew urges the committee to provide no less than FY16 enacted funding level of \$313 million for FEMA Flood Risk Mapping. This includes \$190 million for the Flood Hazard Mapping and Risk Analysis program and \$123 million for the National Flood Insurance Fund – Discretionary Mapping Activities.

The Pew Charitable Trusts supports strong investments in pre-disaster mitigation and risk mapping in order to better prepare for, and protect people and property from, flooding; minimize disruptions to the economy; and curb long-term costs to the federal government and taxpayers. We look forward to working with you and the other committee members and staff throughout this appropriations cycle. For additional information please feel free to contact me at 202-552-2156, or Diane Hoskins, Government Relations at khoskins@pewtrusts.org or 202-552-2056.

Thank you,



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CC: Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey and Members of the Homeland Security Subcommittee