



FEMA

IN REPLY REFER TO: APPEAL RES

September 2, 2022

The Honorable Laura Goos  
Mayor, City of St. Joseph  
700 Broad Street  
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Community: City of St. Joseph,  
Berrien County, Michigan  
Community No.: 260044

Dear Mayor Goos:

This is in response to letters dated March 10, 2021 and May 18, 2021 from Ms. Kristen Gundersen, Community Development Director, Floodplain Manager, City of St. Joseph appealing the proposed Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) boundary and zone designation along the shoreline of Lake Michigan, as presented on the Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) and in the Preliminary Flood Insurance Study (FIS) report for the Berrien County, Michigan, dated December 10, 2019. Please note that your request is considered an appeal because it satisfied the data requirements defined in Title 44, Chapter I, Part 67 of the Code of Federal Regulations (44 CFR Part 67), and was submitted during the 90-day appeal period for the aforementioned Preliminary FIRM and FIS report.

The following scientific and/or technical data were submitted in support of this request:

- *FEMA Coastal Hazard Limits Appeal*, prepared by SmithGroup, March 8, 2021

We received all data necessary to resolve this appeal by August 23, 2021.

The Preliminary FIRM panel associated with this appeal is: 26021C0101D

The submitted data was reviewed and it was determined that the Zone VE SFHA located along what is currently noted as a Primary Frontal Dune (PFD) on Lake Michigan, north of the St. Joseph River on the Preliminary FIRM panel 26021C0101D should be revised. The PFD delineation in this area has been removed. With the area not classified as a PFD, the updated SFHA limits the inland extent of the 1-percent-annual-chance coastal floodplain to the wave runup elevation. The inland limit of the floodplain accounts for the inland displacement of the runup elevation due to storm-induced erosion as necessary.

We have resolved this appeal in accordance with the requirements of 44 CFR Part 67. We have determined that the proposed SFHA boundary for Lake Michigan along the area originally considered a PFD, as shown on the Preliminary FIRM and in the Preliminary FIS report dated December 10, 2019 should be revised based on the submitted data. The update to the Lake Michigan SFHA on the FIRM panels noted above was performed through the Revised Preliminary FIRM process.

Please review the enclosed revised Preliminary FIRM panels and portions of the FIS report to verify that the updated flood hazard data for this appeal resolution has been satisfactorily incorporated,

where appropriate. Please submit any comments regarding this appeal resolution within 30 days of the date of this letter to the following address:

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
Mitigation Division  
536 South Clark Street, 6th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60605  
Attention: John Wethington, Regional Engineer

If you feel that the technical issues originally raised have not been adequately addressed by this resolution letter and that an acceptable resolution will not be feasible through the submittal of additional comments as outlined above, please note that FEMA makes Scientific Resolution Panels (SRPs) available to support the appeal resolution process. SRPs are independent panels of experts in hydrology, hydraulics, and other pertinent sciences established to review conflicting scientific and technical data and provide recommendations for resolution. An SRP is an option after FEMA and a local community have been engaged in a collaborative consultation process without a mutually acceptable resolution.

Your community may contact John Wethington at (312) 408-5485 for additional information on the specific eligibility requirements for the SRP or refer to the enclosed SRP Fact Sheet. To request that an SRP review your scientific or technical data, your community must complete the enclosed SRP Request Form and submit it to the address above within 30 days of the date of this letter.

If we do not receive any comments or the completed SRP Request Form from your community during the 30-day review period associated with this resolution, we will continue processing the FIRM. It is anticipated that FEMA will release Revised Preliminary copies of the Berrien County, Michigan FIRM and FIS report in 2022. These Revised Preliminary products are being prepared by STARRII on behalf of FEMA. Once all comments and appeals are addressed FEMA will finalize the FIRM and FIS report by issuing a Letter of Final Determination (LFD). The LFD will explain the adoption/compliance process and will state when the FIRM and FIS report will become effective.

We appreciate your community's comments and commitment to having the most accurate flood hazard information available reflected on the FIRM and in the FIS report. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact John Wethington of my office by telephone at (312) 408-5485 or by e-mail at [john.wethington@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:john.wethington@fema.dhs.gov).

Sincerely,



Mary Beth Caruso  
Director, Mitigation Division  
FEMA Region 5

Enclosures:

Revised Preliminary FIRM panel 26021C0101D  
Revised Preliminary FIS  
SRP Fact Sheet  
SRP Request Form

cc: John Hodgson, City Manager for City of St. Joseph  
Kristen Gundersen, AICP, CFM, Director, Community Development, City of St. Joseph  
Sarah Pasquesi, PE, CFM, Civil Engineer, Smith Group  
Christopher J. Quattrin, Drain Commissioner, Berrien County  
Matthew Occhipinti, P.E., CFM, State NFIP Coordinator, Michigan Department of Environment,  
Great Lakes and Energy