

Action Plan

Category 6 – Regulations and Permitting

Action 6.7 – Improve Federal & District Collaboration on Floodplain Management



Overview and Implementation Strategy:

This action will ensure that District and Federal agencies are sharing resources and coordinating on development within the floodplains, which include land regulated by both federal and district agencies. Coordination is necessary because federal facilities are regulated by different standards compared to other non-federal property in the District. Washington, DC is unique in that consequences of flooding to federal assets affect the District and vice versa. For example, flooded streets can prevent District residents from getting to their federal jobs. The assembly of the 17th Street Levee closure by NPS helps protect both federal assets as well as District residents in SW DC. There are many examples on the waterfront where federal property is adjacent to non-federal property. If one property owner builds a flood wall to 15 feet, but the adjacent property only has a 14-foot flood wall, then the area is only protected up to 14 feet. This action encourages District and federal agencies to collaborate on development in floodplains.

NCPC and DOEE have identified the following broad opportunities to help achieve this goal.

- Sharing data and models: For example, DOEE will share the results of the Integrated Flood Model, including a map of what the 100-year floodplain plus 2 feet, and 100-year floodplain plus 3 feet would look like.
- Coordinating on project review and setting standards: DOEE is already able to comment on (but not regulate) federal projects through NCPC's coordinating committee and public comment process as part of NCPC's monthly commission meeting.
- Continued coordination on the design and construction of large-scale infrastructure projects, such as levees or blue green infrastructure that may affect both federal and non-federal land. DOEE routinely invites NCPC and other federal agencies to comment as stakeholders on flood risk mitigation projects such as the SW/Buzzard Point Resilience Parks. NPS has engaged DOEE in conversations about repairs to the seawall around the Tidal Basin.
- Staff briefings: On an annual (or more frequent) basis, DOEE and NCPC should host informal or formal briefings to provide updates on floodplain policy, upcoming projects, and review any opportunities for increased collaboration.

Impacted City Ward/ANC:

- All Wards within the 500-year floodplain, especially on or adjacent to federal property

Lead Agency:

- DOEE
- NCPC

Supporting Agencies, Roles/Commitments:

- USACE
- NPS
- GSA
- SI
- DCOP

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Background:

Impact of this Effort on Task Force Goal:

This ongoing action will help ensure that District and Federal agencies are collaborating on flood risk management projects and project review, and to ensure the protection of individual facilities are consistent with surrounding parcels and do not create any adverse impacts to neighboring properties.

Historical Context:

- DOEE’s floodplain review authority does not extend to federal land (unlike other environmental regulatory authorities like stormwater). Projects that are on federal land and in floodplains are subject to floodplain standards that are unique to each implementation agency (NPS, DOD, or GSA for example).
- The federal government owns approximately [85 percent of the shorelines](#) in Washington, DC, making federal floodplain management and infrastructure protection an important part of the District-wide flood resilience strategy.
- The President, through executive orders, sets the minimum standards that each agency must follow regarding floodplain management. More information is available about the floodplain review process in NCPC’s [Floodplain Review Resource Guide](#).
- The current effective executive order is [EO 13690](#), “Establishing a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard and a Process for Further Soliciting and Considering Stakeholder Input.”
- EO 13690 – initially published by President Obama and revoked by President Trump, was reinstated by President Biden’s [EO 14030](#), “Climate-Related Financial Risk.”
- Federal agencies are currently developing national-level guidance in response to EO 14030 that reflects their unique mission, i.e. NPS is developing an NPS-wide floodplain guidance that will be used for all NPS projects in the United States.
- Since 1978, the default federal guidance has used the 100 year-flood elevation as a standard. EO 13690 amends the long-standing federal guidance by establishing Federal Flood Risk Management Standards (FFRMS) which allow federal agencies to consider three different, more stringent approaches (a climate-informed science approach, the 500 year elevation, or the 100-year elevation +2/+3 feet). The FFRMS also encourages nature-based approaches

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Equity

How does this action prioritize equity and residents who are most impacted?

This action is focused on residents and businesses that were exposed to more flood risk than counterparts simply due to having federal property as nearby neighbors. By ensuring federal and local infrastructure projects and development are coordinated we can ensure that all District residents are equally protected.

Timeline:

Fiscal Year	Responsible Agency	Action
2023 and beyond	DOEE NCPC	Meet annually to share new development standards in floodplains, and review collaboration opportunities.
2025	DOEE	Create 100-year + 2 and 100-year +3 feet map with Integrated Flood Model and share with NCPC and federal agencies.

Budget:

Total Estimated Cost: \$0

Long Term Budget Requirements: There are no budget requirements, action will be performed via staff time.

Public Outreach and Input:

Public outreach & engagement approach/actions:

Not Applicable.

What were the Public Comments of relevance to this Action?

Not Applicable.