



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

November 8, 2011

W. Craig Fugate
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Room 700
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Fugate:

We are writing to request that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) alter its regulations under 44 CFR Part 201 and extend to five years the cycle by which State Hazard Mitigation Plans must be submitted. The existing three-year time frame for FEMA to review and approve new mitigation plans has become increasingly burdensome for many state planning offices. Because many of these offices' resources are getting cut, it is increasingly important to improve the plans' flexibility to ensure our nation's mitigation infrastructure is functioning at the highest level possible

As you know, State Hazard Mitigation Plans must be reviewed, updated, and reapproved by FEMA every three years in order for states to remain eligible for FEMA-funded public assistance. Local hazard and Indian tribal mitigation plans, however, must be reviewed every five years. The shorter cycle creates an undue hardship on states with limited staffing or those that have experienced multiple disasters within a plan lifecycle. In order to prevent a disqualifying lapse, these states are compelled to restart the process immediately following the approval of the previous plan.

Extending state's revision cycles will allow additional resources to be allocated for the implementation of mitigation activities. For example, Washington State has a FY11 Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant award pending for about \$450,000 to update the state mitigation plan; if applied to a local mitigation project instead, these dollars could be used to elevate five to eight homes.

FEMA has been forced to respond to concerns surrounding the shortened time frame since the regulation was first established. After numerous state emergency management agencies and local governments filed objections in the federal register, FEMA published an interim rule in 2004 to provide a mechanism for Governors and Indian tribal leaders to request a six month extension. Additionally, in response to a 2008 National Emergency Management Association unanimous request to extend the cycle to five years, the agency announced plans to evaluate input from states, tribes, and local communities on the matter. Despite these measures, FEMA has not given state planning offices permanent relief by bringing state and local mitigation plans together on the same timeline.

Maintaining high quality up-to-date mitigation plans is a critical component of our national disaster response plan. Extending the update cycle to five years would ensure that our state planning offices can complete this vital task, along with their other duties, while maximizing available resources. We ask you to amend the final rule under 44 CFR Part 201 to accommodate this change.

Sincerely,



Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress



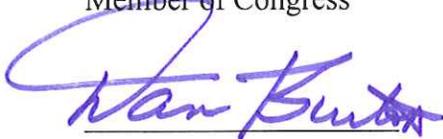
Alan Nunnelee
Member of Congress



Pedro R. Pierluisi
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Dan Burton
Member of Congress



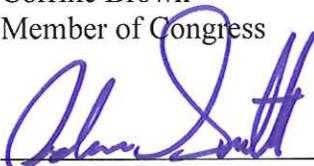
Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress



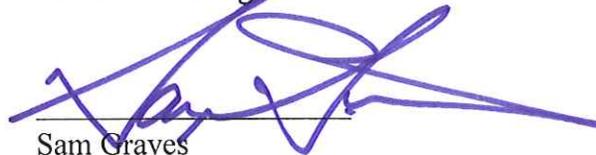
Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



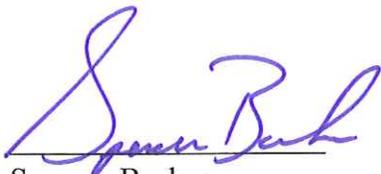
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



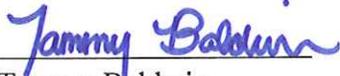
Sam Graves
Member of Congress



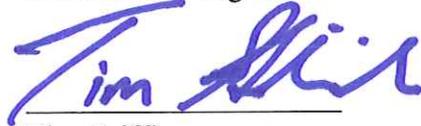
Spencer Bachus
Member of Congress



Steven M. Palazzo
Member of Congress



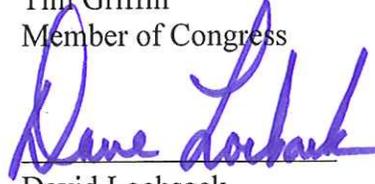
Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



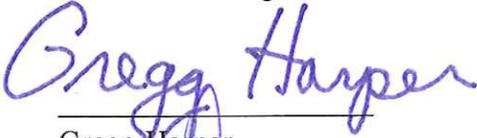
Tim Griffin
Member of Congress



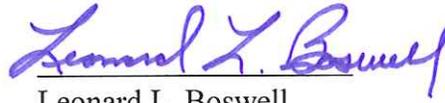
Jay Inslee
Member of Congress



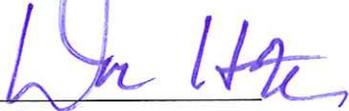
David Loeb sack
Member of Congress



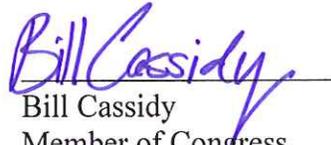
Gregg Harper
Member of Congress



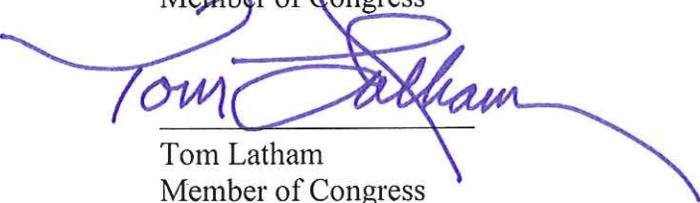
Leonard L. Boswell
Member of Congress



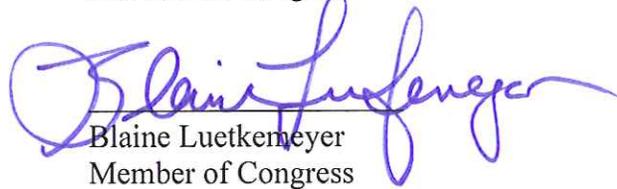
Doc Hastings
Member of Congress



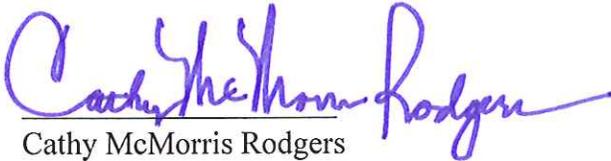
Bill Cassidy
Member of Congress



Tom Latham
Member of Congress



Blaine Luetkemeyer
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress