

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2402

November 20, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

I am writing to urge you to cease development and delay issuance of any Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) until the American public and its representatives in Congress have been given ample opportunity to understand and inform any such standard.

Your Administration has for several years been developing this standard, which would have significant economic consequences well beyond the scope of the federal government. I am concerned that you may soon finalize this policy without any opportunity for input or scrutiny from the public or Congress. Promulgating such an important policy unilaterally would undermine long-term viability of the standard and exacerbate distrust between the Congress and your Administration.

While seeking to ensure federal investments are resilient to floods and other hazards is a commendable goal, compelling government agencies to spend taxpayer dollars to further mitigate against undefined threats is a step that merits careful scrutiny. The cascading economic effects this action could have on coastal and riverine economies nationwide are significant. The public deserves to understand the costs, benefits, and scientific rationale behind any such standard before it is issued. Its issuance alone could stifle housing markets and slow economic recovery.

Congress has clearly demonstrated that it is willing to act in a bipartisan manner on issues related to flood risk. This makes your apparent decision to act alone and without adequate transparency even more disconcerting.

I hope you will give my request to halt development of the FFRMS serious consideration, and will work with Congress and other stakeholders to develop a better understanding of the implications of additional Federal actions to manage flood risk.

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I look forward to your response and to working with you on this issue in the interest of the American public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thad Cochran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "C".

THAD COCHRAN
United States Senator

cc:

The Honorable Jeh Johnson, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security

The Honorable Craig Fugate, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency

TC/kt