

Summary of Statement  
John Pennington, Regional Director  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Region 10, Seattle, Washington  
Before the  
U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy  
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- Federal Emergency Management Agency is responsible for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 allows FEMA to make flood insurance available only in those areas where the appropriate public body has adopted adequate floodplain management regulations for its flood-prone areas. Community participation in the NFIP is voluntary and each identified flood-prone community must assess its flood hazard and determine whether insurance and floodplain management would benefit the community's residents and economy. Nationally, participation in the NFIP helps to reduce flood damage by almost \$1 billion a year. Lending institutions that are federally regulated or federally insured must determine if structures are located in a floodplain and must provide written notice requiring flood insurance.
- In 1994, Congress asked FEMA to submit a report evaluating the economic impact of erosion on coastal communities and the National Flood Insurance Program.
- FEMA commissioned a report by Heinz Center for Science, Economics and the Environment in May 2000.
- The report concluded that approximately 25% of homes within 500 feet of the US coastline would fall victim to the effects of erosion within the next 60 years.
- The study recommended FEMA be authorized to develop maps identifying coastal erosion hazard areas and include expected erosion losses when setting flood insurance rates for coastal areas.
- FEMA has developed a plan in response to a directive contained in the U.S. Senate committee report for the 2001 Appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs, HUD, and Independent Agencies. The plan primarily focuses on administrative, cost, and timeline issues, and also addresses how the mapping of erosion hazard areas would fit within FEMA's Map Modernization effort. In addition, the plan outlines the cooperation that would be required between FEMA, States, and local communities in order to successfully implement a coastal erosion component of the NFIP. Further, the plan acknowledges the need to develop technical Guidelines and Specifications for coastal erosion mapping, an effort that will require

coordination with experts from academia, state programs, and private industry. The plan for Developing Coastal Erosion Hazard Maps is currently undergoing internal review. It is anticipated that the plan will undergo external peer review this summer.

- Many aspects of the plan were based on findings from the “Evaluation of Erosion Hazards” study prepared for FEMA by the Heniz Center in 2000. This study, which focused in detail on the technical, economic, and insurance aspects of erosion mapping, underwent rigorous peer review.
- FEMA believes that legislation is required to authorize the mapping and consideration of erosion data in the flood insurance rating schedule.
- FEMA already maps coastal zones as Special Flood Hazard Areas, termed “V-zones,” in which structures are subject to damage from both flooding and significant waves.
- FEMA has developed a Coastal Construction Manual, which specifies coastal building design and construction standards for coastal areas. These standards help reduce flood losses and damages to coastal buildings, improve building performance in coastal disaster-prone areas.
- FEMA has provided funding to the states to prepare tsunami inundation maps with great success in Alaska, Oregon and Hawaii.
- FEMA is engaged in a massive updating of the entire inventory of Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) across the country. This program is referred to as the Map Modernization Initiative. The Administration has requested, and the Senate approved an increase of \$300 million in fiscal year 2003 funding for this effort. Included in this update will be better, more accurate coastal “V zone” flood maps.
- FEMA Region 10 is working to refine and improve the methods and models for defining “V zone” hazards along the west coast.