Honorable John Carter
Chairman
Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington D.C. 20510

Re: FEMA FY 2019 Appropriations

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Roybal-Allard,

The Association of State Floodplain Managers is very disappointed in FEMA’s Fiscal Year 2019 budget requests for flood risk mapping and for Pre-Disaster Mitigation. The Administration requests only $100 million for mapping and $39 million for PDM. Investment in these two areas is essential to driving down the escalating costs of natural disasters. We recommend appropriations of $400 million for mapping and $500 million for PDM. We urge you to appropriate at least the FY18 levels of $262.5 million for mapping and $249.2 million for PDM.

We are very appreciative of the amounts approved by Congress for mapping and mitigation in the Omnibus appropriations bill for FY18. As you know, the FY18 Administration requests were also extremely disappointing for these programs and we are grateful that your subcommittee recognized their value and provided significantly higher amounts.

There are major unmet needs for mapping and mitigation. Only about 1/3 of the nation’s stream miles and coasts have any flood maps, and only a portion of those have updated maps. Although the Technical Mapping Advisory Council has recommended more granular, structure-specific flood-risk data, which might be a worthy step two objective after basic flood maps are developed, we would remind you that there are many areas of the nation using 20-year-old maps and many areas where growth is occurring that have never been mapped. We must have an accelerated mapping program that gets flood mapping ahead of development. An ASFPM study of mapping needs and costs done several years ago found that another $4 billion to $7 billion is needed just to complete the mapping. Accuracy of the basic maps is greatly enhanced by new technologies, particularly LiDAR elevation data. Identification of areas at risk of flooding not only points to areas where the purchase of flood insurance is necessary, but also guides

Dedicated to reducing flood risk and losses in the nation.
development and infrastructure decisions to reduce future costs to federal taxpayers for disaster relief.

The need for mitigation of existing structures to reduce or eliminate their risk far exceeds the available resources. Repetitive flood insurance claims are a major drain on the National Flood Insurance Fund. A recent report by the Institute of Building Sciences found that investment in mitigation saves $6 for every $1. For flood losses, the return on investment is even higher---$7 saved for every $1 spent on mitigation.

ASFPM also supports the DHS Science and Technology programs, specifically the Research, Development and Innovation, and University Programs. These programs provide critical resources to improve the nation’s capacity to prepare, respond, recover and mitigate against flooding by investing in critical research (FEMA does not have its own in-house research and development capability, so it relies on this DHS office). ASFPM appreciates that funding for Flood APEX has been maintained.

ASFPM has 18,000 members nationwide and 36 chapters representing 41 states. Our members are state and local officials who are floodplain managers, planners, permitting and land-use officials as well as private sector engineers, hydrologists and mappers who assist states and localities. All are dedicated to reducing losses due to flooding.

Investment in risk identification and pre-disaster hazard mitigation will save lives, property and many taxpayer dollars in the future. The nation’s floodplain managers note and appreciate that you recognize this. We hope you will be able to continue these efforts in the FY19 appropriations for FEMA.

Please contact ASFPM Executive Director Chad Berginnis at (608) 828-3000 or cberginnis@floods.org with any questions.

Very sincerely,

Maria Cox Lamm
Chair
Chad Berginnis
Executive Director