

## **Early Notice and Public Review of Proposed Activities in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Designated Floodplain or Wetland**

Date: February 25, 2026

To: All interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the North Carolina Department of Commerce (NCDOC), Division of Community Revitalization (DCR), as the Responsible Entity under 24 CFR Part 58, has determined that proposed actions under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program, may be located in the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard (FFRMS) floodplain or wetland. The DCR will identify and evaluate practicable alternatives to locating the action within the floodplain or wetland and the potential impacts on the floodplain or wetland from the proposed action, as required by Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, and Executive Order 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands. The DCR is proposing to implement the additional single-family (1-4 unit) housing recovery programs of Buyout (including demolition for redevelopment and return to greenspace) and relocation of program homes (both within an existing lot or onto a previously undisturbed lot). DCR previously considered the housing recovery programs including Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of single-family (1-4 unit) Housing. Collectively, these programs make up the Renew NC program. Their goal is to assist homeowners and rental unit owners and tenants that have been and continue to be affected by Hurricane Helene. Renew NC intends to facilitate the buyout, rehabilitation, relocation, and reconstruction of single-family housing units (residential dwellings with a maximum of 1-4 units per property/activity) damaged by Hurricane Helene. Although individual project locations are not known at this time, project sites will be located within the eligible Program area, which is comprised of sixteen (16) counties, specifically, the counties of Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Clay, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, and Yancey; and the sovereign lands of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), known as the Qualla Boundary. DCR is preparing reevaluations of the tiered environmental reviews based on the additional scope items to eliminate redundancy and improve efficiency in evaluating potential impacts of these programs. Under this tiering approach, the sixteen (16) counties and the Qualla Boundary have been grouped into the Mountain Ecoregion, which has been evaluated for potential impacts at a Tier 1 Environmental Assessment level of review. This region is a widely accepted boundary for conservation

planning efforts and is commonly used in organizing, interpreting and reporting information about land-use dynamics.

The extent of the FFRMS floodplain at individual project sites will be either determined using the 0.2 Percent Flood Approach or the Freeboard Value Approach to identify the most protective FFRMS elevation. The scope of the proposed construction-related activities may consist of major and minor rehabilitation, reconstruction, relocation, elevation, and demolition substantially conforming to the existing footprint of each damaged structure or developed lot; buyout/acquisition of previously residential developed or undeveloped land (for just demolition or return to greenspace); and in-kind repair or reconstruction of existing private roads and bridges for property access. In cases where a damaged property is deemed unsuitable or unavailable for rehabilitation or reconstruction due to voluntary buyout, land loss, soil stability, loss of lease or other factors, Renew NC may decide to relocate the same eligible activity to another property (relocation). In the case of relocation, homes will be placed on existing lots or previously undisturbed lots located outside of the FFRMS floodplain and wetlands where possible.

DCR has determined that the proposed project activities could affect up to an estimated total of 4000 acres (based on an estimated 4000 applicants, and each project site being approximately 1-acre in size on average) with a substantial portion of these activities anticipated to be located within the FFRMS floodplain. Although the Programs anticipate the majority of project activities to consist of rehabilitation, reconstruction, buyout (for demolition and/or return to greenspace) and potential relocation of residential structures within the footprint of previously developed areas, which would have no impact on wetlands, projects involving the repair or reconstruction of existing private roads and bridges and relocation of program homes onto previously undisturbed lots may occur in, and potentially impact, Waters of the US, including wetlands.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplains/wetlands and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Commenters are encouraged to offer alternative sites outside of the floodplain /wetland, alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate project impacts on the floodplain/wetland. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment on activities in floodplains/wetlands can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions

taking place in floodplains and/or wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the Division of Community Revitalization (DCR), at the following address, on or before March 12, 2026: North Carolina Department of Commerce (NCDOC), Division of Community Revitalization (DCR), 4301 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4301, Attention: Stephanie McGarrah, Deputy Secretary. Additional project information is available Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the North Carolina Department of Commerce, 430 N. Salisbury St. Ste 4140, Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-1058. Comments may also be submitted via email at [dcr.environmental@commerce.nc.gov](mailto:dcr.environmental@commerce.nc.gov).