

**Federal Emergency Management Agency
PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice of Availability of the Draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment for HMGP
Program Exception for the States of Louisiana and Mississippi**

Interested persons are hereby notified that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has prepared a draft Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) to address the potential impacts to the human and natural environment resulting from FEMA's proposed implementation of a limited exception allowing it to retroactively fund initiated and completed activities eligible under FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) in Hurricane Katrina and Rita impacted areas of Mississippi and Louisiana.

Background

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, some individual property owners and communities in the impacted areas of Louisiana and Mississippi undertook hazard mitigation activities in an effort to recover from the damages and mitigate at-risk properties against future damage. Such activities may have been eligible for funding under HMGP or could have been used to meet the non-Federal match requirement of the program had they obtained FEMA approval before the activities started. However, under HMGP requirements, projects initiated or completed prior to FEMA approval are not eligible for funding.

The hurricanes decimated the capability of local governments in the impacted areas of Mississippi and Louisiana and left communities without resources to assign to the identification, development, and timely application and implementation of hazard mitigation initiatives under the HMGP. These unique circumstances did not occur in any other Gulf Coast states in the aftermath of the hurricanes.

In consideration of these unique circumstances where HMGP could not be implemented within established program timeframes, FEMA is considering a limited exception to federal program requirements that would allow initiated and completed mitigation actions, implemented in the course of repair activities on structures damaged from the events, to be eligible for grant consideration.

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and FEMA's regulations implementing NEPA, the agency has prepared a draft PEA to evaluate the potential impacts to the environment of alternatives for implementing this program exception.

The draft PEA may be viewed and downloaded on FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/hmgp-pea.shtm>.
To request a hard copy, please call the number below.

The 15-day comment period will start on October 21, 2007, and end on November 4, 2007.
Comments on the PEA may be submitted to FEMA as follows:

Email: FEMA-pea-comments@dhs.gov
Fax: 504-762-2871
Phone: 504-762-2425 (during business hours)
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