

CHAPTER 3: Pilot Project Public Review Process

Section 3(b) of the 2006 CBRA requires that the Secretary prepare this final report after providing an opportunity for the submission and consideration of public comments. On April 7, 2009, the Service released to the public its *Report to Congress: John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System Digital Mapping Pilot Project* and announced the start of a 90-day public comment period, which was later extended to 120 days.

This chapter describes the:

(1) notification process for the public comment period; (2) distribution process for the 2008 pilot project report and proposed maps; (3) extension of the public comment period and public meetings; and (4) results of the public comment period. Significant issues raised during the public comment period that are relevant to more than one CBRS unit are itemized and addressed in Chapter 4. Unit-specific comments are addressed in Appendix E.

Notification Process for the Public Comment Period

The Service advised the public of the availability of the report and draft maps for public review and comment via a notice of availability in the *Federal Register*¹ and a news release, both published on April 7, 2009. The notice and news release both contained background information on the CBRA, a description of the pilot project, information on where to obtain a copy of the report and draft maps, and instructions for submitting comments. The Service held a virtual press conference (via webcast and teleconference) on April 7, 2009. The report, draft maps, *Federal Register* notice, news release, and other materials related to the pilot project were also made available to the public on the Service's website.

Distribution Process for the 2008 Pilot Project Report and Proposed Maps

In April 2009, the Service distributed more than 400 copies of the report and accompanying letters requesting comments to stakeholders, including 43 members of Congress, 23 Governors, 33 county and parish chief elected officials (CEOs), 79 local and State floodplain administrators, 23 State coastal zone managers, 56 local and State emergency managers, 39 officials of other Federal agencies, 28 park managers, and 96 other stakeholders (e.g., non-governmental organizations). In addition to the report, members of Congress and Governors from the five States containing pilot project units (Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina) and county and parish CEOs from all 33 affected counties and parishes also received full-sized (25"x 32") copies of the proposed maps relevant to their area of jurisdiction. On April 20, 2009, the Service held briefings on the pilot project for Congressional staff.

Extension of the Public Comment Period and Public Meetings

On June 29, 2009, the Service published a notice in the *Federal Register*² and issued a news release to announce: (1) an extension of the public comment period from 90 days to 120 days (through August 5, 2009) to allow the public more time to review the report and maps and (2) the opportunity to participate in virtual public meetings. A media advisory regarding the comment period extension and the virtual public meetings was sent to media organizations on June 29, 2009. On July 1, 2009, the Service sent letters to county and parish planning officials transmitting the report and draft maps and informing them of

the extension of the comment period and virtual public meetings. The Service also sent a notice of the comment period extension and the virtual public meetings via email to most of the individuals to whom the report was distributed, although email addresses for all stakeholders were not available at the time.

Between July 2 and July 8, 2009, the Service published notices in a total of 34 local newspapers and/or their online equivalents that serve the areas containing pilot project units to announce the virtual public meetings and provide registration and participation instructions. In addition, between April 8, 2009, and February 17, 2010, the news media published approximately 20 articles concerning the pilot project.

The Service held four virtual public meetings (via webcast and teleconference) on July 14 and 15, 2009. Each meeting focused on a different geographic area, provided an overview of the pilot project, and offered an opportunity for questions and answers by the public and media. More than 60 people, including members of the press; local, State, and Federal officials; and private property owners, participated in the virtual public meetings.

Results of the Public Comment Period

Throughout the public comment period, the Service responded to numerous inquiries concerning the pilot project from members of Congress, local officials, and the public via email, letters, meetings, and conference calls. The Service received 159 written comments during the 120-day public comment period (April 7 through August 5, 2009). Unit-specific comments were received for 26 of the 70 units in the 2008 pilot project report, though

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three of the units that received comments are no longer included in the pilot project.³ The majority of the comments received related to the Florida and North Carolina pilot project units. Seventeen of the comments received related to CBRS units that are not within the scope of the pilot project. Comments unrelated to the pilot project are not addressed in this report.

Approximately half of the comments received were from individuals, mostly private property owners. The remaining comments received were mostly from Federal agencies, State and local officials, conservation organizations, and homeowners associations. The Service solicited comments from the Governors of all 23 States and territories containing CBRS units, but no comments were

received from the Governors. See Figure 10 for additional information regarding the comments received.

Significant issues raised during the public comment period that are relevant to more than one CBRS unit are itemized and addressed in Chapter 4. Unit-specific comments are itemized and addressed in Appendix E.

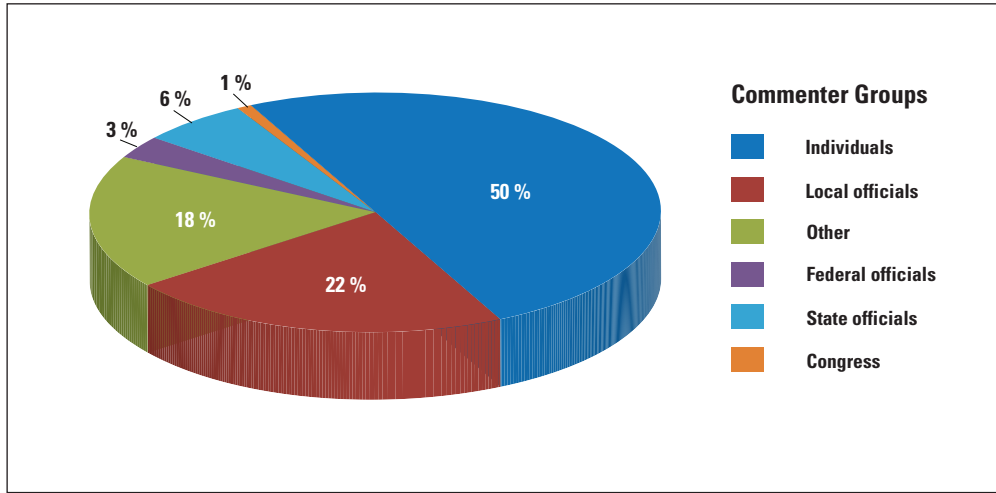


Figure 10. Percentage of comments by commenter type.

¹ 74 FR 15743

² 74 FR 31044

³ Units L07, L08, and L09 have been removed from the pilot project because comprehensively revised maps for these areas have been adopted by Congress. The Service's final recommended maps for these units were made effective via Pub. L. 113-253 on December 18, 2014. The Service received comments during the comment period related to all three of these units. The Service assessed these comments and made any warranted modifications on the final recommended maps before they were adopted by Congress. The Service has not addressed the comments related to these units in Appendix E. Unit FL-64P has also been removed from the pilot project because a comprehensively revised map for this area has been adopted by Congress. The Service's proposed map for Unit FL-64P was made effective via Pub. L. 110-419 on October 15, 2008. No comments were received during the comment period related to Unit FL-64P.