



U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 6
800 N. Loop 288
Denton, TX 76209

FEMA

April 24, 2025

The Honorable Regina Barrow
Louisiana State Senate
4811 Harding Boulevard
Baton Rouge, LA 70811

Dear Senator Barrow,

I am writing to clarify that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is working with the United State Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and local sponsors to complete the revisions to the Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). We are coordinating with our colleagues at FEMA Headquarters to reflect the partial completion of the Comite Diversion Project in accordance with Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) § 61.12, Zone A-99 (Adequate Progress) additional requirements. Part 61, along with requirements for map revisions, listed at 44 C.F.R. Part 65, will be the quickest approach to update the approximately 20 panels of the East Baton Rouge Parish FIS/FIRM.

The USACE/FEMA mapping contractor Comite Diversion Project Committee Task Force Members hold bi-weekly conference meetings every other Tuesday to discuss base mapping, hydrology and hydraulic modeling and critical actions schedule changes to better ensure that the 50 percent completion (both construction completion and expenditure of the last critical element) is met. To qualify for a change to Zone A-99, a flood control project must have had at least 50 percent of the federal share of the project expended and each critical feature of the project must be at least 50 percent completed. These critical features are listed in the enclosure along with the timelines for construction and completion. Once the 50 percent completion threshold is met, FEMA will promptly release the Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) revised panels as FEMA is working to resolve any mapping issues with USACE modelers while the construction teams build the Diversion project.

Please note that from the release of the LOMR until it becomes effective, it takes approximately four and a half months before the statutory mandated appeal process and public notifications can be provided. This is a significant time savings relative to the typical 18–24month processing time for a FEMA-funded re-study or physical map revision.

Please see the enclosure for critical elements and anticipated contract next steps provided by USACE during our April 4, 2025, conference call. Essentially, it appears that the last critical section, either Bayou Baton Rouge Rock Chute or Phase II: Comite River Diversion Structure should reach 50 percent completion during the first quarter of 2027.

FEMA has the following estimated timeline from USACE based on current USACE's construction schedule, however, it is subject to change:

Projected LOMR Timeline

TBD – Final data/modeling available

- Spring 2027 – Project Zone A-99 eligible (all critical features 50 percent complete)
- Summer 2027 – LOMR issued and start of 90-day appeal period
- LOMR effective four and a half months after issuance, likely winter 2027-2028 based on current USACE construction schedule which is subject to change

Once the LOMR becomes effective, impacted residents can begin applying for the revised zones flood insurance rates. Please be aware that as an A zone, an A-99 zone still has mandatory purchase requirements. Also, if the ground is below the revised base flood elevation (BFE), it will convert to a new AE zone, with the changed BFE, not to an A-99 zone. A-99 zones are for the current A or AE zoned areas, where due the Comite Project, the ground would be higher than the revised flood elevation. Upon completion of the project, these A-99 zones would be remapped to X zone, either shaded or unshaded.

We are interested in your input and questions regarding future activities about the Comite Diversion Project, and FEMA remapping of regulatory flood zones. Please contact Roosevelt Grant, III, Mitigation Director at 940-898-5127 or roosevelt.grantiii@fema.dhs.gov for additional questions.

Sincerely,

George A. Robinson
Regional Administrator

Enclosure: Comite Critical Features Schedule

cc: Comite Diversion Project Committee Task Force Members: