



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
New England District

696 Virginia Road  
Concord, MA 01742-2751

# Public Notice

In Reply Refer to: Janet Cote

[nae-pd-pn@usace.army.mil](mailto:nae-pd-pn@usace.army.mil)

Planning Division

Date: February 18, 2022

Comment Period Closes: March 21, 2022

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## 30 DAY PUBLIC NOTICE RHODE ISLAND COASTLINE COASTAL STORM RISK MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Interested parties are hereby notified that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New England District has completed the Rhode Island Coastline Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRМ) Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment (IFR/EA) subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (Public Law (P.L.) 91-190). The study addresses CSRМ opportunities and feasibility along the shoreline and coastal tributaries of southeastern Rhode Island from Narragansett Bay to the Massachusetts border. This study is authorized by a resolution adopted by the Senate Public Works Committee dated September 12, 1969, a resolution adopted by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works dated August 2, 1995, and by P.L. 84-71. Attachment 1 lists the pertinent laws, regulations, and directives.

**Project Description:** Scoping meetings were held with the non-Federal Sponsor (NFS) and with representatives from municipalities located within the study area early on the scoping of the study in order to better understand the region. The NFS, with the assistance of stakeholders, identified eleven key focused study areas within the regional study area. These areas included Barrington/Warren, Block Island, Bristol, Jamestown, Narragansett, Newport Downtown, Newport/Middletown Reservoirs, North Kingstown, Portsmouth, Providence, and Warwick/Cranston. Focus areas for the study were identified based on elevation data, structure density, and discussions with town and state officials regarding high damage-prone areas and history of coastal storm damages. Using information from these meetings, the USACE concentrated on developing alternative solutions for the focused study areas. Additionally, nonstructural measures were considered for the entire study area (i.e., the shoreline from Point Judith to the Massachusetts border). Multiple screening iterations of the alternatives were conducted, and a Tentatively Selected Plan has been identified.

The Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) for the project consists of elevating the first floors of 323 single family residences in the study area (Attachment 2). The elevation design height was determined separately for each structure based on the 1 percent annual exceedance probability water levels within the study area + wave contribution + 1 foot + sea level change. Elevation can be performed using fill material, on extended foundation walls, on piers, post, piles, and columns. Elevation is also a very successful technique for slab-on-grade structures.

In addition, 210 non-residential structures will be floodproofed (Attachment 2). Floodproofing was considered for non-residential structures and large multi-family structures not in a designated VE Zone and without a basement. VE-zones are areas subject to inundation by the 1-percent-annual-chance flood event with additional hazards due to storm-induced velocity wave action. Floodproofing measures consist of dry floodproofing or wet floodproofing. Dry floodproofing makes a structure watertight below the level that needs flood protection to prevent floodwaters from entering. An example of a dry floodproofing measure is to apply a waterproof veneer, such as a layer of brick backed by a waterproof membrane, directly to the outside surface of an existing structure. Wet floodproofing allows floodwaters to enter an enclosed area of a structure without damaging the structure or its contents. All construction materials and finishing materials are water resistant and all utilities elevated above the design flood elevation in the areas of structures proposed for wet floodproofing.

**Purpose of Work:** The Rhode Island Coastline CSRSM study was conducted because the study area experiences frequent flooding from high tides, spring tides, and coastal storms; is considered at high risk of coastal storm flooding with an associated threat to life safety; and is susceptible to relative sea level change. The study's purpose is to identify a plan to reduce the risk of coastal storm damage along a large portion of the Rhode Island coastline while contributing to the resilience of communities, important infrastructure, and the natural environment. The study area includes significant critical infrastructure at risk of damage from future flooding and coastal storms including police, fire, and emergency support service facilities; schools; energy production facilities; water and wastewater facilities; and nursing homes and assisted living facilities in addition to communities and businesses. These areas experience frequent flooding from high tides, spring tides, and coastal storms; are considered at high risk of coastal storm flooding with an associated threat to life safety; and are susceptible to relative sea level change.

**Alternatives:** The feasibility study plan formulation process considered a range of structural and nonstructural measures to manage the risk of coastal storm damage in the study area. Through an iterative planning process, potential CSRSM measures were identified, and alternatives were formulated, evaluated, and compared against each other in order to establish a TSP. Screening of alternatives identified structural (floodwalls and closure structures) and nonstructural alternatives (wet/dry flood proofing and elevation of residential structures) that would reduce coastal storm risk for the study area.

**Additional Information:** Additional information may be obtained from the Planning Division of the USACE, Project Manager, Ms. Janet Cote, or the Project Ecologist, Ms. Grace Moses at the address shown above. These individuals may also be reached by phone or email, Janet Cote at 978-318-8728 or email at [Janet.Cote@usace.army.mil](mailto:Janet.Cote@usace.army.mil), and Grace Moses at 978-318-8717 or email at [C.Grace.Moses@usace.army.mil](mailto:C.Grace.Moses@usace.army.mil).

**Coordination:** The proposed work has, or will be coordinated with the following agencies:

**Federal:**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
National Marine Fisheries Service

**State of Rhode Island:**

Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management  
Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council  
Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission

**Tribal Nations:**

Narragansett Indian Tribe  
Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)  
Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

**Local:**

Town of Little Compton  
Town of Aquidneck Island (Middletown)  
City of Newport  
Town of Jamestown  
Town of Narragansett  
Town of North Kingstown  
Town of Tiverton  
Town of Portsmouth  
Town of Bristol  
Town of Warren  
Town of Barrington  
Town of New Shoreham  
Town of East Greenwich  
City of Warwick  
City of Cranston  
City of East Providence

**Other:**

ProvPort  
Newport Department of Utilities  
Narragansett Bay Commission  
Save the Bay  
The Nature Conservancy, Rhode Island Chapter

**Environmental Impacts:** A Draft IFR/EA was prepared for the Rhode Island Coastline CSRMC Study and is available for review at the website link provided below. A preliminary determination was made that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. This determination will be reviewed in light of facts submitted in response to this notice.

**Other Information:**

- a. **Local Sponsor:** The non-Federal sponsor for this study is the Rhode Island Coastal Resource Management Council (RICRMC).
- b. **Floodplain Management:** In accordance with Executive Order 11988, the USACE has determined that the proposed work will not contribute to negative impacts or damages caused by floods.
- c. **Endangered Species:** It is our preliminary determination that the project is not likely to adversely affect threatened or endangered species. USACE is in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that the proposed activity will not significantly affect any species or critical habitat designated as endangered or threatened pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844).
- d. **Cultural Resources:** We cannot fully determine how the project may affect historic properties prior to finalization of this feasibility study. Therefore, we are developing a Programmatic Agreement (PA) that outlines the process to identify and evaluate historic properties and avoid, minimize, and where possible, mitigate any adverse impacts in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and implementing regulations 36 CFR 800. The PA will allow us to complete the necessary historic and archaeological surveys during the follow-on Preconstruction, Engineering, and Design phase of the project, once the nonstructural measures and identified properties have been confirmed. The PA will be submitted to the Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Officer, along with any other consulting parties, for review and concurrence. We are also in coordination with the Narragansett Indian Tribe, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and the historical commissions or societies of each community in accordance with the NHPA.
- e. **Federal Consistency with Coastal Zone Management:** We have made the preliminary determination that the project will be conducted in a manner consistent to the maximum extent practicable with all applicable Rhode Island Coastal Zone Management Policies. The USACE will submit a Consistency Determination to the RI CRMC and request their concurrence.
- f. **Additional Requirements:** No in-water work is proposed. As such, a Water Quality Certificate (Section 401 of the Clean Water Act of 1977), Section 404(b)(1) evaluation (Section 404 of the Clean Water Act), and an Essential Fish Habitat review pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act are not required.

**Availability of the Draft Integrated Report:** A copy of the report can be obtained via the website below or upon request by contacting the Project Manager, Janet Cote at 978-318-8728.

<https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects-Topics/Rhode-Island-Coastline-Coastal-Storm-Risk-Management-Project/>

Any person who has an interest that may be affected by the proposed project may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the comment period of this notice and must clearly set forth the interest and the manner in which the interest may be affected.

Please bring this notice to the attention of anyone you know to be interested in this project. Comments are invited from all concerned parties and should be directed to the District Engineer at 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742, ATTN: Planning Division (Ms. Janet Cote), within 30 days of this notice.

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Date

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John A. Atilano II  
Colonel, Corps of Engineers  
District Engineer

Attachments

## Attachment 1

### PERTINENT LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND DIRECTIVES

Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.)

Clean Water Act, as amended (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.)

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451)

Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.)

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, 24 May 1977

Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 24 May 1977

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 11 February 1994

Executive Order 13007, Accommodations of Sacred Sites, May 24, 1996.

Executive Order 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks, 21 April 1997

Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460L-12 et seq.)

Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a, et seq.)

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-667e)

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (54 U.S.C. 100101 et seq.)

White House Memorandum, Government-to-Government Relations with Indian Tribes, April 29, 1994.

## Attachment 2: TSP Elevation and Floodproofing Locations

