



Delaware River Basin Commission

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Carol R. Collier

Executive Director

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July 12, 2007

Honorable Edward G. Rendell
Governor of Pennsylvania
Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Honorable Jon S. Corzine
Governor of New Jersey
State House
P.O. Box 001, West State Street
Trenton, NJ 08625

Honorable Eliot Spitzer
Governor of New York
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Honorable Ruth Ann Minner
Governor of Delaware
Legislative Hall
Dover, DE 19901

Honorable Governors:

I am pleased to present to you the final report of the Delaware River Basin Interstate Flood Mitigation Task Force, including consensus recommendations of the task force members for mitigating flooding throughout the Delaware Basin and an inventory of the initiatives already under way.

The 31-member task force was convened last October in response to your September 21, 2006 letter (copy attached). In the wake of three main stem floods within less than two years, you set an aggressive timetable for this assignment, including development of a preliminary action plan by the end of 2006, with implementation beginning as early as possible in 2007. Thanks in large part to the commitment and dedication of task force members and DRBC staff, who spent hundreds of hours evaluating options and negotiating consensus recommendations, we adhered to this timeline. In doing so, Commission staff and the task force also engaged the public by publishing a Preliminary Action Plan during February 2007, and soliciting comment on that document at meetings up and down the river corridor. This letter summarizes the recommendations and priorities that emerged from this process.

The enclosed action agenda sets forth 45 consensus recommendations for a more proactive, sustainable and systematic approach to flood damage reduction in the Delaware Basin. The recommendations are based upon a set of guiding principles that concern floodplain restoration and protection, institutional and individual preparedness, local stormwater management and engineering standards, and the judicious use of structural and non-structural measures. Six management areas are addressed: reservoir operations, structural and non-structural mitigation, stormwater management, floodplain mapping, floodplain regulation, and flood warning.

The accompanying summary table lists the task force recommendations by implementation timeline and identifies desired results and resources required for each. You will see that fourteen of the 45 actions are already underway, 24 can be implemented within one to three years, and seven will require long-term investment. The task force has concluded that no set of mitigation measures will entirely eliminate flooding along the Delaware River, but task force members believe that a combination of measures will improve the basin's resiliency – its capacity to prepare for and recover from flooding. Included among the recommendations is a slate of actions for regulation and control of reservoir releases. These recommendations call for releases that would reduce the likelihood and volume of spills from some basin reservoirs during storm events to help mitigate flooding.

Over the past months, flood victims and the basin's congressional delegation have echoed your request for a set of immediate measures to address flooding. The following immediate actions are proposed:

- **Establish areas of priority funding for acquisition, elevation, and flood proofing.** (*Action S-6*)
- **Develop a coordinated reservoir operating plan.** (*Action R-2*)
- **Develop and implement a consistent set of comprehensive floodplain regulations beyond minimum NFIP standards across the entire Delaware River Basin.** (*Action FR-2*)
- **Enable stormwater utilities. This approach has water quality and quantity benefits and reinforces the states' existing momentum for stormwater management and control of nonpoint source pollution.** (*Action SM-2.3*)

Notably, there was significant constructive tension among task force members as to the relative value of a "flood control" approach as compared to a "floodplain management" approach. The first four recommendations listed above fall into the latter category. The second encompasses both. The consensus of the task force is that aggressive implementation of a *floodplain management* strategy over the short term should be coupled with a methodical evaluation of *flood control* options over the long term.

The task force members would appreciate an opportunity to discuss these recommendations with you and your staff. Task force members from your respective states will contact your offices to set up these briefings. If you wish to provide me with the name of a contact for this purpose, I will share the information with the appropriate task force member or members. The Interstate Flood Mitigation Task Force also intends to meet annually commencing in late 2007, in order to monitor progress in implementing the action plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to coordinate this effort. I will continue to work with your respective representatives on the Commission to advance our ambitious agenda to achieve flood resilient communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol R. Collier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol R. Collier
Executive Director

Enclosures

c: DRBC Commissioners – Brigadier General Todd T. Semonite
Lt. Col. Gwen E. Baker
John A. Hughes
Kevin C. Donnelly
Cathy Curran Myers
Lisa P. Jackson
Mark N. Mauriello
Alexander B. Grannis
Mark Klotz
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor, City of New York
Emily Lloyd, Commissioner, NYC DEP