

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION OFFICE
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FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93727-6820



August 24, 2026

Chairman Phillip Peters
Board of Supervisors, Chair
1115 Truxtun Avenue, Fifth Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301

BY ORDER OF THE BD/SUPV

Referred To _____

Copies Furnished *Each Supervisor,
CAO, Co-Counsel, AED*

Date *9/2/2026*

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By *J. Reuben*, Deputy

Dear Chairman Peters,

The purpose of this letter is to notify you that Kern County has successfully completed its Community Assistance Contact (CAC). The CAC was conducted by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), on behalf of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), on June 23, 2026, via Microsoft Teams. This CAC is now closed. We would like to commend the Community's Floodplain Administrator for their work in the County's floodplain management program.

As a participating community in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the county agreed to adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations that meet the minimum NFIP standards and help mitigate flood risk. In exchange, FEMA provides access to flood insurance for property owners and renters in your community. The CAC provided an opportunity to assess the county's ability to enforce your local floodplain management regulations and to provide DWR with an opportunity to answer any technical questions your staff had.

Thank you for the county's participation in the NFIP and continued commitment to reducing the impacts of flooding through effective floodplain management. The NFIP standards and the county's roles and responsibilities are specified in the county's current floodplain ordinance, which meets the NFIP requirements found in Title 44, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 59-60.

DWR and FEMA Region 9 are available to support the county's floodplain management program. Please contact Enrique Alameda Jr at (916) 204-2576 or Enrique.AlamedaJr@water.ca.gov if you have any questions or need assistance. I can be reached at Anntonette.Duncan@water.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Anntonette Duncan

Anntonette Duncan
State NFIP Coordinator
Floodplain Management Branch
California Department of Water Resources

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Community Assistance Contact Summary
Kern County

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The program enables property owners in participating communities to purchase insurance as protection against flood losses, in exchange for states and communities adopting floodplain management regulations that reduce future flood damages. In California, approximately 99 percent of communities participate in the NFIP. The NFIP is based on a mutual agreement between the Federal Government and local communities. Communities that participate agree to regulate development in mapped flood hazard areas according to specific criteria and standards. This partnership includes flood hazard mapping, flood insurance, and regulatory requirements. Communities who choose to participate in the NFIP must meet the minimum requirements by adopting and enforcing flood management ordinances.

A Community Assistance Contact (CAC) is a meeting, call, or visit with an NFIP community to evaluate the effectiveness of the local floodplain management program and to offer assistance if needed. This summary describes the findings of the CAC conducted by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) on June 23, 2026. The Summary is not intended to be a comprehensive examination of the community's implementation of the NFIP.

Community Floodplain Ordinance:

DWR has determined the county's Floodplain Ordinance (FPO) complies with the minimum NFIP requirements outlined in Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations, Sections 59 and 60. However, DWR has identified one issue and provided a recommendation to improve consistency between codes.

A copy of the county's effective FPO can be found online in the Kern County Municipal Code, Chapter 17.48 – Floodplain Management. The Municipal Code can be accessed via the county's website.

Findings

As specified in *Kern County Municipal Code §17.48.270(B)*:

"Elevations and flood proofing:"

- B. "For areas of shallow flooding, new construction, substantial improvement and other proposed new development of any structure in a special flood hazard area shall have the lowest floor, including basement, elevated at least one (1) foot above the shallow flooding depth or depth number specified in feet on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), or at least two (2) feet if no depth number is specified. The elevation is to be measured from the highest adjacent grade upstream

of the structure. Nonresidential structures may meet the standards in Subsection 17.48.270(C). Qualifying uninhabitable attached garages or storage rooms and accessory structures (such as a shed or detached garage) may meet the requirements of Subsection 17.48.270(E). Certification of the lowest floor shall be provided in accordance with the Kern County Residential Code or the Kern County Building Code as adopted. Upon the completion of the structure, the elevation of the lowest floor, including basement and top of platform of equipment or machinery servicing the building, shall be certified by a registered professional engineer, architect, or licensed surveyor, or verified by the building official to be properly elevated. Such certification or verification shall be provided to the floodplain administrator."

This language meets the minimum requirements as of 44 CFR §60.3(c)(2) and §60.3(c)(7), however under §60.1(d), NFIP regulations serve as minimum requirements, and any state or local floodplain management criteria that are more restrictive shall take precedence. Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations specifies more restrictive requirements in Cal. Code Regs., tit. 24, pt. 2.5, §R306.2.1(2).

As specified in the *California Residential Code §R306.2.1(2)*:

"In areas of shallow flooding (AO Zone), buildings and structures shall have the lowest floor (including basement) elevated to a height above the highest adjacent grade of not less than the depth number specified in feet on the FIRM plus 1 foot or not less than 3 feet if a depth number is not specified."

Where multiple codes apply, the more restrictive standard takes precedence per 44 CFR §60.1(d). Therefore, the county should incorporate California Residential Code §R306.2.1(2) into its FPO. Any additional provisions of the California Code of Regulations shall also be applied and enforced.

DWR recommends that the county amend the language in the current FPO to adopt the requirements by reference or specified language in the preceding CCR sections. Alternatively, adopting DWR's 2020 California Floodplain Model Ordinance ensures the minimum standard for freeboard for residential structures and non-residential structures are compliant with the flood provision of the California Residential Code and the California Building Code.

DWR staff has provided any additional recommendations as noted in the file titled "Kern County FPO Chapter 17.48_EAcomments" Word Document, delivered separately through email.

Mapping and Insurance

The current Flood Insurance Study for Kern County is dated October 21, 2021. The

county's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) consist of panels updated in September 26, 2008, and October 21, 2021. Flood zones in the community include zones: AE, A, AO, AH and X. The Floodplain Administrator, Mr. Jason Scheer, commented that the county requires elevation of the lowest floor for structures located in Special Flood Hazard Areas.

The county accesses FIRMs and Letters of Map Change through FEMA's Map Service Center (MSC). At this time, the county has identified no anomalies or deficiencies associated with the community's effective FIRMs. Recent development has occurred in the Lamont and Rosedale areas.

There are currently 1375 NFIP flood insurance policies in force in the county, amounting to a total premium of \$1,025,935. There have been 154 claims filed since the county's entry into the NFIP.

Floodplain Development Review Process

The Floodplain Management department reviews development permit applications and uses FEMA's MSC along with the county's geographic information system to verify if a structure is in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). Once routed for floodplain review, plans are evaluated for compliance with the Floodplain Management Regulations by the Senior Engineer.

The county uses Elevation Certificates to certify elevations and requires elevation documentation at grading plan issuance and at final construction. Elevation Certificates are required in the SFHA. The Senior Engineer will review Elevation Certificates for compliance, if there is an appeal for a permit located in the floodplain the Floodplain Administrator will be informed and review the appeal. The county currently has a digital permitting system and files away all permits along with Elevation Certificates.

Resources:

NFIP Resources

- [Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(44 CFR\) – Parts 59.22 and 60.3](#)
- [44 CFR Annotated Version for Floodplain Managers](#)
- [FEMA NFIP General Information](#)
- [National Flood Insurance Technical Bulletins](#)
- [Reducing Flood Losses Through the International Codes](#)
- [CA DWR: National Flood Insurance Program \(ca.gov\)](#)
- [NFIP Elevation Certificate and Instructions](#)

Mapping Resources

- [FEMA Map Service Center](#)
- [How to Read a Flood Insurance Rate Map Tutorial](#)
- [National Flood Hazard Layer \(NFHL\)](#)

- [Process to Revise a Flood Map](#)
- [Flood Map-Related Fees](#)
- [Letter of Map Amendment & Letter of Map Revision-Based on Fill Process](#)
- [MT-2 Application Forms and Instructions for Conditional Letters of Map Revision and Letters of Map Revision](#)
- For flood mapping and insurance inquiries, please contact the [FEMA Mapping and Insurance eXchange \(FMIX\)](#) at (877) 336-2627 or [FEMA-FMIX@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:FMIX@fema.dhs.gov)

Insurance Resources

- [NFIP General Public Outreach & Education Website](#)
- [Federal Insurance: Moonshot Starter Kit](#)
- [FEMA's Flood Risk Communication Tool Kit and Video Series](#)
- For any questions related to insurance, please reach out to FEMA Region IX NFIP Insurance Specialist, Carlos Rendo at carlos.rendo@fema.dhs.gov

Additional Resources

- [FEMA NFIP General Information](#)
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program – Section 404, Stafford Act
 - The Section 404 funding is used to provide protection to undamaged parts of a facility to prevent or reduce damage caused by future disasters. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services manages hazard mitigation activities and projects through the 404 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). To learn more about the HMGP, visit: [FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance](#).

Training Resources

- [Association of State Floodplain Managers \(ASFPM\)](#) (Free courses listed below)
 - [The Official Guide to Becoming a CFM](#)
 - [NFIP 101: Introduction to Floodplain Management](#)
 - [Mapping Repetitive Flood Risk](#)
- [FEMA 480 Floodplain Managers Desk Reference](#)
- [\(2023 Version\) CRS Elevation Certificate](#)
- [National Flood Insurance Program – What residents need to know](#)
- [Overview of Changes to Elevation Certificate 2023](#)
- [Overview of Changes to the Floodproofing Certificate 2023](#)
- [How to Review a 2D No-Rise Package](#)
- [Emergency Management Institute \(EMI\)](#) in Emmitsburg, Maryland offers a variety of courses in Floodplain Management and Mitigation. Instruction, course material, housing, and transportation are reimbursed at no cost to the student. Free independent study courses are also available online; search training in the [EMI Course Catalog](#).

Meeting Participants:

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