

**Statement by Congressman Jerry F. Costello  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and  
Emergency Management  
Hearing on National Flood Plain Remapping: The Practical  
Implications  
April 2, 2008**

Thank you, Madame Chairwoman for calling today's hearing on the National Flood Plain Remapping program and its practical implications on our constituents, communities, and economic development. I would like to welcome today's witnesses.

In 2004, FEMA embarked on a Map Modernization and General Flood Mapping Process in response to National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements and feedback provided by Federal, State, and local Program stakeholders.

I believe this is an important program because it allows us to take advantage of revised data and improved technologies for identifying flood hazards and helps community officials and citizens be better prepared for flood-related disasters.

FEMA has been moving forward on implementation of its revised maps and I have grave concerns with the piecemeal approach it is currently pursuing.

For example, in the St. Louis region, preliminary maps will be available for comment and review as early as June 2008. Across the river in St. Louis, the mapping project has not started and maps are not expected for another 2-3 years. What is troublesome is that we share the same floodplain or watershed boundaries. So, what affects one side, ultimately affects the other.

Unfortunately, residents on the Illinois side will be subject to new flood insurance requirements a full 2-3 years sooner than our neighbors across the river, simply because the state of Illinois in consultation with FEMA began doing our mapping sooner.

That will have a dramatic effect on economic development and homeownership in Illinois.

I do not believe that map modernization should be stopped. Instead, in order to correct this inconsistency, I believe that the new maps and any type of rate changes or requirement to purchase insurance that result from the new maps should all take effect on the same day for regions affected by the same floodplain or watershed boundaries.

That way, no community and its economic development is placed at a disadvantage.

That is exactly what I sought to do with the Costello amendment to HR 3121. Districts for the Corps of Engineers follow watershed boundaries, not state boundaries. The Corps does this to better manage flood control, navigation, infrastructure and environmental stewardship. Thus, by including the Costello amendment to HR 3121, you provide more equality to the remapping process. Regions that share a floodplain, like Illinois and Missouri, will be affected by mapping consistently and at the same time.

Mr. Les Sterman is here from my area's metropolitan planning organization – the East-West Gateway – to explain further the practical implications of the remapping efforts.

I want to again thank Ms. Norton for holding this important and timely hearing and I look forward to the testimony.