

Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard Designated Floodplain and/or Wetland

To: All interested Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

This is to give notice that the South Carolina Office of Resilience (SCOR) has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order(s) 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, and/or Executive Order 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 in Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Wetlands Protection. The activity is funded under the Hurricane Helene Housing Program which will utilize HUD Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding. The proposed projects will be located in Aiken, Cherokee, Edgefield, Saluda, and Union counties, and site-specific project locations may be situated within the FFRMS floodplain or a mapped wetland. The extent of the FFRMS floodplain was determined using the 0.2 percent flood approach.

SCOR is conducting a Tier I Broad Level environmental review for the Hurricane Helene Housing Program. Project activities will include rehabilitation, reconstruction, replacement, elevation, relocation/demolition, and buyout of single-family homes and/or mobile home units (MHUs). The proposed projects will be located in multiple locations throughout each county, with the exact location of site-specific projects determined at a later date. Site-specific project activities will be conducted on previously developed residential properties.

According to the FEMA Flood Map Service Center, Aiken County contains approximately 55,564 acres within the 100-year floodplain and 4,132 acres within the 500-year floodplain. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) identifies approximately 59,471 acres of designated wetlands in the county. Cherokee County has an estimated 19,243 acres within the 100-year floodplain and 74 acres within the 500-year floodplain. It also includes approximately 3,413 acres of designated wetlands. Edgefield County contains about 12,557 acres within the 100-year floodplain and 174 acres within the 500-year floodplain. The county has approximately 5,943 acres of designated wetlands. Saluda County has an estimated 21,832 acres within the 100-year floodplain and 9 acres within the 500-year floodplain. The NWI identifies approximately 4,930 acres of designated wetlands in the county. Union County contains approximately 25,418 acres within the 100-year floodplain and 18 acres within the 500-year floodplain. It also has about 10,490 acres of designated wetlands. None of the counties include areas classified as Coastal High Hazard Areas (V Zones) or Limits of Moderate Wave Action (LIMWA). Floodplains and wetlands are beneficial for wildlife, creating a variety of habitats for fish and other animals. In addition, floodplains are important to the storage and conveyance of storm water, water quality protection, and recharge of groundwater.

SCOR has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial functions and intrinsic values of the existing floodplain/wetland: Alternative 1 (Selected Alternative): Perform project activities in the floodplain and/or wetland, as necessary, based on the existing location of previously developed residential properties. No project work will be completed in the floodway, except for the removal of buildings and improvements from the floodway; Alternative 2: Relocate all single-family homes outside the floodplain and wetland; Alternative 3: The use of

other flood protection measures for structures within the FFRMS Floodplain such as the construction of levees; and Alternative 4: the no-action alternative. SCOR has determined that Alternative 1 is the only viable option. This conclusion is based on the following factors: (1) the need to provide relief from the impacts of Hurricane Helene; (2) the necessity of supporting critical repairs and rehabilitation to improve residents' health, safety, and well-being, as well as to enhance the structural integrity and preservation of storm damaged single-family homes; (3) the intention to avoid displacing residents who wish to remain in their current homes; and (4) the opportunity to mitigate and minimize impacts on human health, property, and floodplain/wetland resources, as project activities will take place on existing homes within previously developed residential properties.

Homes located in the FFRMS floodplain that receive assistance for reconstruction, repair of substantial damage, or substantial improvement will be elevated in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations or requirements, including 24 CFR Part 55. All homes assisted through the program within the 100-year floodplain will require the maintenance of flood insurance in perpetuity. When replacement of an MHU is not feasible at the same location as the original structure, the MHU will be replaced at an alternative location with a new MHU or new construction of stick-built housing. The alternative site must be a developed residential parcel, properly zoned, and with access to utilities, including water (municipal or working well), sewer (municipal or working septic system), and electricity. The site must also be outside of any floodplain and mapped wetlands.

SCOR has reevaluated alternatives to building in the floodplain/wetland and has determined that it has no practicable alternative to completing project activities in the floodplain/wetland. Environmental files documenting compliance with Executive Order 11988, as amended by Executive Order 13690, and/or Executive Order 11990, are available for public inspection, review, and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplain/wetland and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplain/wetland can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplain/wetland, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the SCOR at the following address on or before August 13, 2025: South Carolina Office of Resilience, 632 Rosewood Drive, Columbia, South Carolina 29201 and 803-832-8004; Attention: Eric G. Fosmire, Chief of Staff and General Counsel (RE: Hurricane Helene Housing Program-Aiken, Cherokee, Edgefield, Saluda and Union Counties). A full description of the project may also be reviewed from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM at the address above. Comments may also be submitted via email to eric.fosmire@scor.sc.gov.

Date: 08/05/2025

