

Kenai Peninsula Borough

Planning Department

MEMORANDUM

TO: Peter Ribbens, Assembly President
Members, KPB Assembly

THRU: Peter A. Micciche, Mayor PM
Robert Ruffner, Planning Director RR
Samantha Lopez, River Center Manager SL

FROM: Julie Hindman, Floodplain Administrator JH

DATE: November 21, 2024

SUBJECT: Ordinance 2024- 35 , Amending KPB 21.06 .030, General Provisions, to Adopt the Most Recent FEMA Flood Insurance Study and Associated Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the Kenai Peninsula Borough (Mayor)

The Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) has been a participating community in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) since 1986. The NFIP makes federal disaster insurance, federal hazard mitigation grants, federally-subsidized mortgages, and affordable flood insurance available within participating communities. A requirement of participating in the NFIP is that communities must adopt and regulate a Floodplain Management Program. KPB staff from the Donald E. Gilman River Center administers the KPB Floodplain Management Program. Participation within the NFIP requires adopting new Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) when they become available, along with the supporting Flood Insurance Study (FIS). The Ordinance will adopt new FIRMs for 47 miles of the Kenai River, from the outlet of Skilak Lake to the Cook Inlet, effective February 28, 2025.

The majority of the current FIRMs for the Kenai River were created forty-three years ago, in 1981. Rivers are dynamic and can change the floodplain in that amount of time, so in 2020 KPB began working with FEMA to update the FIRMs for the Kenai River. For nearly five years, River Center staff has worked closely with FEMA through several technical reviews and, in conjunction with FEMA, held several public outreach events in an effort to accurately update the Kenai River FIRMs.

On August 28, 2024, FEMA issued its *Letter of Final Determination*, giving KPB six months to accept and adopt the new FIRMs or be suspended from the NFIP. If suspended, KPB and landowners in the floodplain would lose access to flood insurance, federally-subsidized mortgages, certain grant funds, and the ability to receive disaster relief funds. Losing access to these resources would have a profoundly negative impact on the residents of the KPB; therefore, River Center staff requests your support of the Ordinance.

Your consideration is appreciated.