



FEMA



## Scientific Resolution Panels

FEMA's Scientific Resolution Panel (SRP) process reinforces FEMA's commitment to work with communities to ensure the flood hazard data depicted on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) is built collaboratively using the best science available. Flood hazards are constantly changing, and as such, FEMA regularly updates FIRMs through several methods to reflect those changes. When changes to the FIRMs are met with conflicting technical and scientific data, an independent third party review of the information may be needed to ensure the FIRMs are updated correctly. The Scientific Resolution Panel serves as the independent third party.

### Who can request an SRP?

A community, Tribe or political entity that has the authority to adopt and enforce floodplain ordinances for the area under its jurisdiction can request FEMA use the SRP when conflicting data are presented. Chief Executive Officers or authorized community representatives must make or endorse the SRP request if they did not develop or propose the conflicting technical data.

### When can communities request an SRP?

A community can request an SRP if it has:

- Not received a Letter of Final Determination (LFD);
- Submitted an appeal during the 90-day appeal period with scientific or technical data resulting in different flood hazards than those proposed by FEMA;
- Allowed at least 60 days of community consultation with FEMA (but no more than 120 days).

Additionally, a community that has received a FEMA-issued appeal resolution letter and has not exercised the SRP process will have 30 days from the issuance of the letter to request an SRP.

### Independent Panel Sponsor

The SRP process is managed by the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS), a non-profit organization independent from FEMA. NIBS will act as the Panel Sponsor, coordinating the SRPs, ensuring that proper regulations and procedures are employed and maintaining a cadre of experts from which Panel members are selected.

### Panel Member Selection

For each appeal, an SRP (or Panel) of three or five members will be convened. Panel members are technical experts in surface water hydrology, hydraulics, coastal engineering, and other engineering and scientific fields that relate to the creation of Flood Hazard Maps and Flood Insurance Studies throughout the United States.

Based on the technical specifications of the appeal, NIBS will develop a list of potential panel members with relevant expertise from its cadre of experts. NIBS will ensure that there is no conflict of interest amongst the panel members. NIBS will confirm that members do not reside in the state from which the appeal is taken and have no personal or professional interest in its findings of the appeal.

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NIBS will provide the list of eligible panel members to the community and FEMA. The community selects the majority (in the case of a five-member Panel, the community selects three), and FEMA selects the minority (in the case of a five-member Panel, FEMA selects two).

## The Process

To request an SRP, the Chief Executive Officer of a community or authorized representative completes an SRP Request Form and submits it to FEMA during the time periods outlined above.

Once FEMA confirms the appeal is eligible for an SRP, FEMA will forward the SRP Request form to NIBS to initiate the Panel selection process and develop a list of potential members.

Once the Panel is convened, Panel members will be provided with a summary of the issue, FEMA's data, and the data the community submitted during the 90-day appeal period. Panel members will review the data and, on a point-by-point basis, deliberate and make a decision based on the scientific and technical challenges of the appeal.

If the community feels it is necessary to make an oral presentation in support of its appeal, it must include a justification on the SRP Request Form.

## Resolution

The Panel will render a written recommendation to FEMA, based on the scientific and technical data submitted by the community and FEMA. The recommendation may either deny the community's data or incorporate it in part or in whole into the FIRM. For an appeal to be incorporated, the community's data must satisfy the NFIP standards for flood hazard mapping.

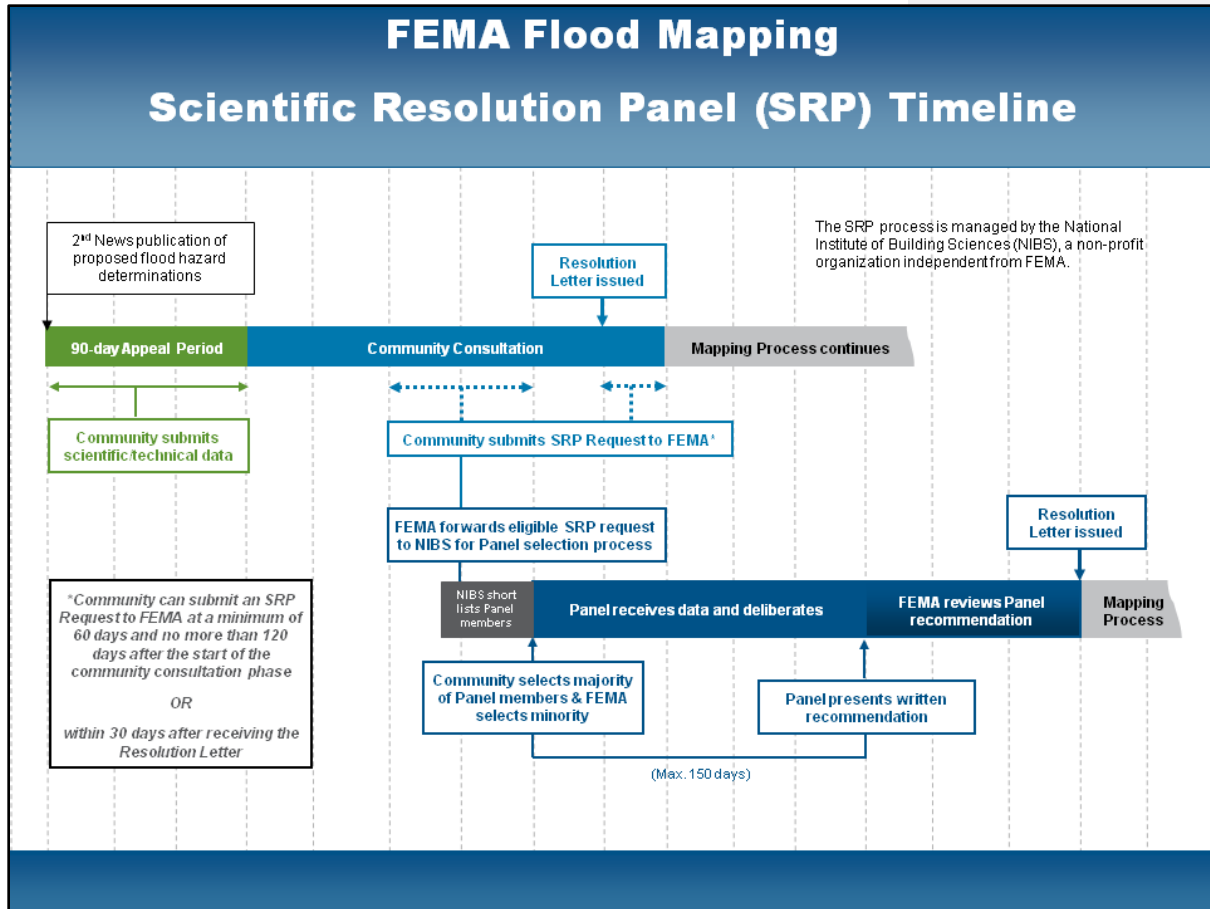
The Panel will present a written report with its decision and rationale to FEMA and the community no later than 150 days after being convened. The SRP's decision will become the recommendation provided to the FEMA Administrator. Once a final determination has been made, FEMA will issue a resolution letter. If changes to the maps are made, FEMA will incorporate the changes into revised preliminary FIRM panels and Flood Insurance Study. These changes will be made available to the community with a resolution letter for review prior to the issuance of an LFD.

Once a determination is made and a resolution letter is issued, the community will not be able to re-submit an appeal of the proposed flood hazard information nor request an SRP again. If the community is not satisfied with the recommendation of the Panel or the determination of the FEMA Administrator, it may appeal to the appropriate United States District Court, as outlined in Section 67.12 of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) regulations.

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## For Additional Information

For more information on appeals, see the FEMA document: [Appeals, Revisions, and Amendments to National Flood Insurance Program Maps: A Guide for Community Officials.](#)

Part 67 of the NFIP regulations, which pertains to appeals, is available on the “Forms and Publications” section of FEMA’s Flood Hazard Mapping website at [www.fema.gov/fhm](http://www.fema.gov/fhm).

Other Important Links [www.floodSRP.org](http://www.floodSRP.org) [www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/st\\_hot.shtm#2](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/st_hot.shtm#2)

Status of Map Change Requests: [http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/st\\_main.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/st_main.shtm)

Risk MAP: [www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/rm\\_main.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/rm_main.shtm)

Flood Hazard Mapping Annex: [www.floodmaps.fema.gov](http://www.floodmaps.fema.gov)

Flood Insurance: [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov)

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