

News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

1. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: December 3, 2007

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Independent Evaluation of Recent Flooding in New Hampshire

First Public Information Meeting to be held December 12

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services announced today that an independent evaluation will be performed to determine the specific causes of recent floods in New Hampshire and provide recommendations for improving water management procedures and dam operations to reduce the impacts from future flooding. The evaluation was requested by Governor Lynch following the floods that devastated Southern New Hampshire last April. That independent evaluation is now getting underway, and the first of three public meetings will be held on Wednesday, December 12, 2007, at 7:00 PM in the auditorium of the Department of Environmental Services on 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire. The purpose of this meeting will be to introduce the public to the study team and provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the scope of work. Residents from the flood-affected communities are encouraged to attend.

The \$330,000 study is being funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and performed by a team led by the URS Corporation, an international engineering firm under contract to FEMA. In addition, an independent panel of national experts in water resources management will oversee the entire study to ensure that the work and recommendations meet the highest level of professional independence and expertise.

As part of the study, the engineering firm will determine the causes of the flood in the Piscataquog, Souhegan, Soucook, Suncook, Contoocook, Cocheco, Lamprey, Oyster, Salmon Falls and Isinglass river basins. The team will also examine the policies, programs and mechanisms for coordination of flood control operations and notification of flood-prone areas; assess the effects of dam operations on flood conditions in the Salmon Falls, Souhegan, Piscataquog, and Suncook basins; and determine the differences between the April 2007 flood and other recent flood events in these basins, including the May 2006 flood. Based on the results of these evaluations, the team will provide recommendations for any remedial, protective or management measures that would help mitigate the effects of future flooding.

As the evaluation proceeds, two additional public meetings will be held: one in mid-March 2008 to present the interim findings of the factors contributing to the April 2007 flood, and the other in May 2008 to present the final results of the evaluation.

For more information, please contact Jim Gallagher, at the Department of Environmental Services Dam Bureau, at 271-1961.