



## **OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**

Department of Homeland Security

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### **DHS OIG Audit Finds that FEMA's Management of Its Flood Mapping Programs is Inadequate**

A new Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General (OIG) report reveals that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) needs to improve its oversight and management of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) flood mapping program. OIG auditors concluded that without the recommended improvements, FEMA cannot provide the public with a reliable representation of its true flood vulnerability or ensure that NFIP rates reflect the real risk of flooding. Flood hazard identification and mapping is an integral part of the NFIP and a foundation for flood plain management, flood insurance, and flood mitigation.

The report, "FEMA Needs to Improve Management of Its Flood Mapping Programs," found that as of December 2016, only 42% of the total flood map miles in FEMA's inventory were updated and valid, meaning that more than half of flood map miles in the database either required a re-study or still needed to be assessed and validated. This falls well short of FEMA's internal performance goal of 64% updated and valid flood maps, revised downward from 80% when it became clear that FEMA would not reach its goal.

OIG auditors found that this was caused in part because of ineffective financial management of flood map projects, an outdated life cycle cost estimate for the program, and weak oversight of the progress of flood map projects—especially those placed on hold due to outside circumstances. Of the 88 projects tested by OIG auditors, 65 were on hold for more than a year.

FEMA also lacks oversight to ensure that its flood mapping partners—such as private engineering firm contractors, state and local governments, and regional agencies—comply with FEMA's guidance ensuring the quality of flood maps.

"The recent flooding in Texas after Hurricane Harvey serves as a devastating example of the importance of accurate and reliable flood maps," said Inspector General John Roth. "We are optimistic that our recommended changes will improve FEMA's management of the flood mapping program and introduce internal controls to ensure the quality of the maps produced by FEMA's partners."

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