



## Executive Summary

### Acknowledgements

The State of New Jersey 2014 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP or Plan) was a collective effort of the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management – Recovery Bureau (NJOEM), the Mitigation Core Team (MCT) and the State Hazard Mitigation Team (SHMT), supported by numerous state agencies/departments and academia throughout the State. Further, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region II provided technical support for this Plan update.

This update process expanded the involvement of State agencies and academia with an interest in mitigation within the State (Appendix F). The data and information, guidance and input of these participants was invaluable and has made this Plan a much stronger mechanism to promote mitigation statewide at all levels of government.

### Background

The recent events of Tropical Storms Irene/Lee and Superstorm Sandy, and also the September 11, 2001 World Trade Center attacks that occurred adjacent to our shores, continue to underscore our State's exposure and vulnerability to both natural and human-caused hazards. There is little doubt that many of these hazard events will continue to occur, perhaps with greater frequency and severity. While we cannot prevent or alter many of the forces of nature, we can take measures to reduce the damages, losses and suffering that have historically occurred. Hazard mitigation distinguishes actions that have a long-term impact from those that are more closely associated with pre-disaster preparedness, response to an event, and recovery from an incident. Hazard mitigation is specifically meant to break the cycle of damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage.

In 2000, Congress passed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) and promulgated subsequent regulations to promote state and local planning focused on reducing our exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards. Further, Congress designated funding sources to support state and local implementation of the mitigation strategies identified in these plans. According to the federal regulations outlined in DMA 2000, state HMPs are required to be updated and re-approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) every three years; local HMPs must be updated every five years. The New Jersey Standard HMP was initially adopted in April 2005 and updated every three years as outlined below:

- Initial adoption - April 2005
- First update - April 2008
- Second update - April 2011 with minor revisions and updates as of November 2011

This Plan update fulfills the State's three-year update cycle obligation established under DMA 2000.

### Planning Process

The 2014 Plan is a comprehensive update of the 2011 HMP. The 2014 Plan update has been reformatted and organized to be more readable while paralleling the structure of the requirements outlined in **44CFR 201.4** and elements in FEMA's Plan Review Tool. All information previously contained in the 2011 Plan has been incorporated. In addition, the 2014 Plan has been updated and enhanced to include best available information and data.



For the 2014 Plan update, NJOEM contracted a planning consultant to facilitate and lead the planning process with the MCT and SHMT. The MCT membership was expanded and tasked with leading the development of the Plan in conjunction with the State Hazard Mitigation Officer. Collectively the MCT and SHMT involved in this plan update effort included the following agencies:

- New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM)
- New Jersey Department of State
- New Jersey Office of the Attorney General (NJOAG)
- New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP)
- New Jersey Department of the Treasury
- New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT)
- New Jersey Office of the State Climatologist
- New Jersey Office of the Governor
- New Jersey Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding
- New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
- New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance
- New Jersey Department of Education
- New Jersey Board of Public Utilities
- New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness

Throughout the development of the 2014 Plan update, the NJOEM Mitigation Unit, the State Hazard Mitigation Officer, members of the MCT and SHMT, and the planning consultant reached out to State agencies and academia and encouraged active participation in this update. State agencies shared inventories of State facilities, shared spatial layers identifying risk to structures from various hazards, participated in the refinement of the 2014 mitigation goals, and helped develop the 2014 mitigation actions. Overall, more than 70 participants were invited to participate in the planning process. Most notably, the Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding provided guidance and assistance with coordination among state agencies as they were the lead for the recovery efforts after Superstorm Sandy.

In summary, the 2014 Plan includes:

- Enhanced natural and human-caused hazards profiles and vulnerability assessment
- Loss estimation for State buildings
- Goals, objectives, strategies and actions that will guide the State's mitigation activities
- Comprehensive evaluation of progress towards achieving stated goals, strategies and actions
- More robust process for implementing and monitoring the Plan

## **Hazard Risks and Disasters in the State**

Located in the "roaring 40s" (latitude), with such a great diversity in geography, demographics and the built environment, it is little surprise that the State of New Jersey is vulnerable to a wide variety of risks, both natural and human-caused. As required under DMA 2000, this Plan focuses on those natural hazards that pose greatest risk to the state including flooding (riverine and coastal), hurricanes and tropical storms and accompanying wind and storm surge, severe winter storms, wildfire and earthquake. Since the 2011 Plan was submitted to FEMA for review and approval, New Jersey has experienced seven Federal Disaster Declarations, one of which has been the most severe the State has experienced in recent history. This plan update process was occurring at the same time during the largest, most costly federal disaster in State history, Superstorm Sandy (Hurricane Sandy DR-4086).



To meet other emergency compliance standards and assure a broad, comprehensive risk management planning approach, this Plan update continues to consider man-made and technological hazards, and has expanded this consideration to include the full range of hazards identified in associated and complementary emergency and risk management documents and programs within the State. Coincident to this plan update process, the State Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness has been preparing a Threat, Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) that further expands our understanding of risk to the broad range of hazards that can affect our State.

## Goals

For this 2014 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) update, the MCT and SHMT met on numerous occasions to discuss the State's goals and objectives. Overall, it was determined that all of the 2011 mitigation goals continue to align with the State's priority to reduce potential future losses from hazards. Further, due to recent interest that information be added to the Plan regarding the energy and retail fuel resiliency for the State of New Jersey, which will be funded and implemented through the Energy Allocation Initiative and the Sandy HMGP 5% initiative, an additional goal was added. Thus, the enhanced mitigation goals for the 2014 Plan update are as follows:

- Goal 1: Protect life
- Goal 2: Protect property
- Goal 3: Increase public preparedness and awareness
- Goal 4: Develop and maintain an understanding of risks from hazards
- Goal 5: Enhance State and local mitigation capabilities to reduce hazard vulnerabilities
- Goal 6: Support continuity of operations pre-, during, and post- hazard events (new to 2014)

## Mitigation Strategies

As required by FEMA, the MCT and SHMT completed a comprehensive evaluation of the mitigation strategies and actions from the previous plans and reported on the status of each. In addition, State agencies were provided the opportunity to include new strategies or actions in the 2014 Plan update. New actions were prioritized to ensure they are cost-effective, environmentally sound, and technically feasible.

Because of disaster responsibilities described throughout this Plan, while great progress has been made on many of the actions and initiatives identified in the 2011 Plan, a limited number of previous mitigation actions were considered complete though many are ongoing. All mitigation actions are fully described in Section 6, Mitigation Strategy.

State agencies were provided the opportunity to include new strategies or actions in the 2014 Plan update, which were prioritized to ensure they are cost-effective, environmentally sound, and technically feasible. The updated mitigation strategy carries forward incomplete actions from the 2011 Plan, identifies new actions and initiatives, and includes actions from a number of agencies that did not identify actions in previous iterations of the State Plan.

## Plan Implementation

In addition to identifying and evaluating the State's capabilities to address mitigation and identifying a comprehensive mitigation strategy, another key component to mitigation is funding. As part of the 2008 and 2011 Plan update processes, the planning team reviewed current sources of federal, State, local, or private funding, and tried to identify other potential sources of mitigation funding. For the 2014 Plan update, the



federal and State funding programs that provide funding were reviewed and updated and new additions were made.

Further, the 2014 Plan update includes enhanced processes and programs to advance local hazard mitigation planning throughout the State, and to administer the FEMA grant programs that fund both state and local mitigation projects and efforts. Through increased staff resources, the State continues to provide greater levels of hazard mitigation planning and plan implementation support.