

The Honorable Robert Menendez
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20150

Dear Senator:

In 1983 FEMA issued its latest Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM), which provided Base Flood Elevation (BFE) for the lowest floor. If you were in compliance with the BFE before the issuance of the maps, but were below the BFE on the 1983 map, your premium was calculated as if you were still in compliance with the BFE. Under the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, this grandfathering will no longer be available.

Unfortunately, the act calls for the termination of grandfathering with respect to any new FIRMs that are adopted. Since 1983 thousands of homes have been built in Sea Isle City and hundreds of thousands of home have been built in other shore communities along the Atlantic coast line. All of these homes were built in good faith that they were in compliance with the applicable BFEs.

After thirty years, FEMA will issue new FIRMs. In the meantime, in December 2012, FEMA issued an Advisory Base Flood Elevation (ABFE) map in order to assist in the Hurricane Sandy rebuilding process. If the flood insurance maps issued in 2014 are anything like the ABFE, thousands upon thousands of property owners will see their flood insurance rates rise dramatically, probably to a point where they are unaffordable. Consider a policy that covered \$250,000 for the building and \$100,000 for the contents. A property that is currently in an "A" zone and is paying \$1,724 a year would find it paying \$8,603 in a "V" zone. Worse, it is more than likely that the BFE would have been raised and the rate increase would be even more significant. For example, if a property owner now in "A" zone at the BFE level finds himself in a "V" zone two feet below the BFE, the premium would rise from \$1,724 to \$15,764. This is fundamentally unfair to homeowners who built or purchased their homes with a good faith understanding that their properties were in compliance with the BFE requirements.

I urge you to fight for your constituents to repeal the termination of grandfathering in the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012. If this is not possible, at the very least, allow a phase-in period that would not put an undue hardship on property owners, cause dramatic decreases in property values, and adversely affect the tourism industry along coastal areas.

Yours truly,

Your name
Your street address
Your city, state and zip code