EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The turn of the millennia witnessed a dramatic change in how our Nation prepares for and responds to disasters. The passage of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (Act) reoriented the focus of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) programs to promote projects and plans which reduce the exposure of Americans and their property to natural hazards. In 2002 Congress further defined how to implement the Act by publishing in the federal register 44 CFR Parts 201 and 206 Hazard Mitigation Planning and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program: Interim Final Rule. Ohio must have a FEMA approved standard All Hazards Mitigation Plan to remain eligible for federal Mitigation and Public Assistance funds associated with a presidential disaster declaration. The Ohio standard plan is complete and FEMA approved requisite your signature as governor.

The development of the state plan began in 2002. The first step was a contract between FEMA and the engineering firm URS to develop an overall hazard analysis and risk assessment for Ohio. During this time the Ohio EMA researched and collected required state, federal and business resources to complete the plan. In January of 2004 the Ohio Department of Public Safety, at the request of the Ohio EMA, contacted the Directors of all Ohio state agencies, the EMAs of neighboring states and FEMA Region V (Chicago) inviting them to participate in the plan’s development. The formal plan development began with an informational/educational meeting in March of 2004 attended by 8 state agencies, the West Virginia EMA and Pennsylvania EMA.

Concurrent with development of the plan in 2002 Ohio experienced 8 federal declarations for tornados, flooding, massive power failure, ice storms and more. The strain on State resources combined with plan development obstacles prompted Ohio to request assistance from FEMA Regions IV, V and X. This planning team used the information from the URS document and existing state work and aggressively undertook plan development.

The planning team decided to complete Ohio’s natural hazards in phases. The current edition of the plan details Ohio’s highest priority hazards: riverine flood, tornado, severe winter weather, landslide and dam failure hazards. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Water proved an invaluable resource for the riverine flood and dam failure hazards. Over the course of the next three years Ohio’s severe thunderstorm, coastal erosion, land subsidence, wildfire, drought, earthquake, hazardous material, natural biohazard and terrorism hazards will be added. One of the federal requirements is to resubmit our state plan every three years. By the first three year update all hazards identified in the hazard identification by URS will be complete.

The assessment of Ohio’s hazards and potential losses is county based. Only counties affected by a specific hazard would be addressed in the analysis. For example, only counties bordering Lake Erie would be addressed for coastal erosion while entire state would be assessed for tornados. Losses are assessed by government, business and residential building stock. US Census data were used to assess the building stock. The
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flood risk utilized the ODNR Statewide Floodplain Building Inventory. State owned structure analysis utilized an inventory maintained by DAS, Risk Management. Each data source proved to have significant limitations which are noted in the plan and became goals for future plan improvement.

The next stage in the planning process is to develop a statewide blueprint of how to mitigate the hazards. These include: state goals and objectives, state and local capabilities available to address the issue, specific state actions based on our goals and objectives, and finally identification of available funding. Flooding was quickly identified as Ohio’s greatest natural hazard. Many of the actions identified in the plan have some component of flood mitigation associated with them. The highest priority for state and federal action are to involve structures flooded repetitively. The three common methods to address repetitively flooded structures are: acquisition removal, elevation above flood levels, and retrofitting key utilities and equipment above flood levels. Tornados are Ohio’s next most significant hazard. Tornado saferooms, National Weather Service (NWS) radio transmitters in-home (NWS) receivers, and public education programs are the primary methods of mitigating Ohio’s tornado hazard.

The statewide blueprint for hazard reduction is only part of the solution. To effectively reduce hazard exposure the state plan must reflect the goals, objectives and actions identified in local planning efforts. While the state actions include the acquisition of repetitively flooded properties, it is the local plans which contain the specific structures to address. The state plan contains a listing of identified hazards and recommend actions to address them distilled from each local plan. As funding becomes available, the state plan will guide local actions to reduce risks.

The final portion of the state plan is a discussion of how the Ohio EMA will work to ensure ongoing development of the plan and implementation of the actions listed within. Without ongoing plan development and review the state plan will quickly prove an ineffective mitigation tool. Arguably one of the key activities associated with the effort is monitoring the funding action items and collecting data regarding their life and property saving effects for Ohio.

The Ohio mitigation plan addresses each required element of (44 CFR 201.4) outlined below:

1. Adoption by the State: §201.4(c)(6) and §201.4(c)(7) ~ Purpose of this summary

2. Planning Process ~ How the plan was developed
   - Documentation of the Planning Process: §201.4(c)(1) ~ Explanation of steps taken to develop the plan
   - Coordination Among Agencies: §201.4(b) ~ How other state, federal, business/non-profit entities are involved in mitigation
   - Program Integration: §201.4(b) ~ How this plan integrates with others in the state
3. Risk Assessment ~ **What can happen and how many people and property will be affected**
   - Identifying Hazards: §201.4(c)(2)(i) ~ **What can happen**
   - Profiling Hazards: §201.4(c)(2)(i) ~ **Where will it happen**
   - Assessing Vulnerability by Jurisdiction: §201.4(c)(2)(ii) ~ **What is at risk by county**
   - Assessing Vulnerability of State Facilities: §201.4(c)(2)(ii) ~ **What state property is at risk**
   - Estimating Potential Losses by Jurisdiction: §201.4(c)(2)(iii) ~ **How much will we likely lose in an event by county**
   - Estimating Potential Losses of State Facilities: §201.4(c)(2)(iii) ~ **How much state property will likely be lost in an event**

4. Mitigation Strategy ~ **What is Ohio’s blueprint to protect lives and property**
   - Hazard Mitigation Goals: §201.4(c)(3)(i) ~ **What are the goals of the state to reduce exposure**
   - State Capability Assessment: §201.4(c)(3)(ii) ~ **What state resources exist to accomplish our goals**
   - Local Capability Assessment: §201.4(c)(3)(ii) ~ **What local resources exist to accomplish their goals**
   - Mitigation Actions: §201.4(c)(3)(iii) ~ **What specific actions will the state take to implement our goals**
   - Funding Sources: §201.4(c)(3)(iv) ~ **What funding is available to implement our actions**

5. Coordination of Local Mitigation Planning ~ **How will the state plan reflect local plan information**
   - Local Funding and Technical Assistance: §201.4(c)(4)(i) ~ **How will Ohio help local jurisdictions fund and implement mitigation plans**
   - Local Plan Integration: §201.4(c)(4)(ii) ~ **How local capabilities and mitigation actions are reflected in the state plan**
   - Prioritizing Local Assistance: §201.4(c)(4)(iii) ~ **How will the state determine which local action items are funded**

6. Plan Maintenance Process ~ **How will the plan expand and grow**
   - Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Plan: §201.4(c)(5)(i) ~ **How will we insure the plan is ready for resubmission in 3 years**
   - Monitoring Progress of Mitigation Activities: §201.4(c)(5)(ii) and (iii) ~ **How state will track the progress of funded local actions**

All of these requirements are acknowledged in the FEMA review of Ohio’s standard state plan. FEMA is now assembling a review panel to review and comment on Ohio’s enhanced plan submission. When approved, the enhanced plan will increase federal funding for Ohio mitigation projects.