



**FEMA**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
NETTLETON SCHOOL DISTRICT MIDDLE SCHOOL SAFE ROOM PROJECT  
JONESBORO, CRAIGHEAD COUNTY, ARKANSAS  
HMGP-DR-1819-AR PROJECT #44**

**BACKGROUND**

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969; the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) regulations for implementing NEPA at 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 10; and the President's Council on Environmental Quality NEPA implementing regulations at 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508; FEMA prepared a Tiered Site-Specific Environmental Assessment (SEA) to assess the environmental impacts that might result from the construction of a community safe room at the Nettleton School District Middle School in Jonesboro, Craighead County, Arkansas, that is proposed under HMGP-DR-1819-AR Project #44. Through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), which is authorized under Section 404 the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, FEMA provides grants to states and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures that reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and to enable mitigation measures to be implemented during the immediate recovery from a disaster.

This SEA was tiered from, and incorporates by reference, the findings of the *Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for Hazard Mitigation Safe Room Construction* dated June 2011, including the Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) for the PEA which was issued on June 2, 2011. FEMA found that all environmental areas of concern are accounted for in the PEA with the exception of floodplain impacts. This SEA focused on floodplain impacts because this required additional analysis and was beyond the scope of the PEA. This SEA informed FEMA's decision on whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a FONSI.

FEMA determined that the site of the proposed safe room is located in a 100-year floodplain, Zone AE, as depicted on Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map FIRM Community Panel Community Panel 05031C0260D, dated January 29, 2010. In compliance with FEMA regulations implementing Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, FEMA carried out the 8-step decision-making process for actions that are proposed in the floodplain per 44 CFR 9.6.

Two project alternatives were considered in the SEA: 1) No Action Alternative and 2) Proposed Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, a community safe room would not be constructed. Students, faculty, and staff at the Nettleton Middle School and Intermediate Center would continue to be in danger when tornadoes and quickly arising storms target the area.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, FEMA proposes to provide funding to the Nettleton School District for the construction of a new stand-alone safe room on the Nettleton Middle School campus, located at 2305 Promise Lane (Latitude: 35.81613; Longitude: -90.65346), Jonesboro, Craighead County, AR. It will be constructed on a vacant yard area between a parking lot and the north entry of Nettleton Middle School building. The facility will be 6,063 gross square feet, with 5,025 square feet of usable safe room space. The safe room will provide protection for approximately 1,000 students, faculty, and staff of the school and the residents that live and work in close proximity to the safe room. Existing utilities will be extended to the proposed site for use by the facility. When not in use as a safe room, the facility will be utilized for multi-purpose educational uses. The safe room will be connected to the existing school by sidewalks, ramps, and covered walkways. The total acreage of ground disturbance will be less than one acre for the entire project. The safe room will be built in accordance with FEMA 361: Design and Construction Guidance for Community Safe Rooms (FEMA, 2008).

FEMA completed the 8-step decision-making process and determined that the Proposed Action Alternative meets the requirements of 44 CFR 9. Because the construction of a community safe room is considered a critical action, FEMA reviewed the proposed action based on the 500-year floodplain elevations as determined in the Flood Insurance Study for the project area. In order to mitigate flood impacts to the safe room, the applicant will elevate the structure above the 500-year floodplain elevation of 253.4 feet.

A public notice was posted in the Jonesboro Sun and the SEA was made available for a 15-day public comment period at a local repository, electronically upon request from FEMA, and at FEMA's website. No comments on the SEA were received from the public during the 15-day comment period.

## **CONDITIONS**

Actions under this SEA and FONSI must meet the following conditions. Failure to comply with these conditions would make the FONSI determinations inapplicable for the project and could jeopardize the receipt of FEMA funding.

1. Nettleton School District is required to comply with the conditions that are stated in the Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) for the Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Hazard Mitigation Safe Room Construction, dated June 2, 2011, for the Proposed Action Alternative.
2. The Nettleton School District must build the safe room in compliance with FEMA 361: Design and Construction Guidance for Community Safe Rooms (2008) and the requirements in International Building Code (IBC) 2006 in order to mitigate the seismic risk associated with constructing a new safe room in the New Madrid zone.
3. Nettleton School District must coordinate with the local floodplain administrator and obtain required permits prior to initiating work. All coordination pertaining to these

activities and applicant compliance with any conditions should be documented and copies forwarded to the state and FEMA for inclusion in the permanent project files.

4. Nettleton School District must elevate the safe room at or above the 500-year floodplain elevation of 253.4 feet.
5. In accordance with 44 CFR §9.12, Nettleton School District must publish a public notice 15 days prior to the start of construction activities. Documentation of the public notice is to be forwarded to FEMA for inclusion in the permanent project files.

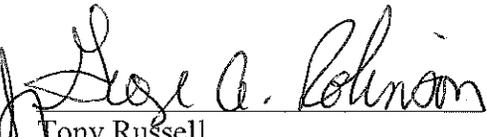
## FINDING

Based upon the information contained in the final SEA, the potential impacts resulting from the proposed project analyzed in the SEA, and in accordance with FEMA's regulations at 44 CFR Part 10 and Executive Orders 11988 (Floodplain Management), 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), and 12898 (Environmental Justice), FEMA finds that the implementation of the proposed action will not have significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an EIS will not be prepared.

## APPROVAL

  
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Kevin Jaynes, CHMM  
Regional Environmental Officer  
FEMA Region 6

Date 11/15/11

  
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Tony Russell  
Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region 6

Date 11/15/11