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Longport Adopts an Ordinance Designed to Reduce Flood Losses

Hurricane Sandy brought extreme levels of flooding to the New Jersey coast. The damage was widespread in neighborhoods and many homes were washed away. Residents in the Borough of Longport witnessed firsthand the success of the more strict building codes they were required to build to throughout the past few years. Many residents initially resented these restrictive requirements but the success seen after Sandy proved the value of these higher standards.

The Borough of Longport has had its share of flooding and has experienced a substantial loss of real estate in the past due to erosion from storms and the effects of the Atlantic Ocean. Over the years, several blocks have washed away into the Egg Harbor inlet on the south end.

Local officials, businessmen, and citizens formed a committee that developed a plan to keep flood insurance premiums as low as possible and create a more resilient community. The committee has since adopted higher regulatory standards that have saved between 200 and 250 homes from Sandy's flooding. These homes have either been elevated or have been newly constructed since the borough has adopted these new standards.

To reduce the impacts of flooding, the committee adopted an additional foot of freeboard, which requires the lowest floor elevation to be two feet above the Base Flood Elevation. They also lowered the substantial improvement and substantial damage threshold. During initial damage assessments after Sandy, many of the homes constructed in compliance with the new ordinance saw little to no damage.

As required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), participating communities must adopt and enforce the minimum standards of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) which enables residents to purchase flood insurance. Longport went one step further and became a member of the Community Rating System (CRS), a voluntary program that recognizes community activities and efforts beyond the minimum standards for floodplain management. CRS ratings can help to



To learn more on building codes or proper permits, contact your local officials and visit

<http://www.fema.gov/building-science/building-code-resources>. To find out more information on NFIP or CRS, visit <http://www.floodsmart.gov>. To find information about coastal construction design, visit <http://www.fema.gov/residential-coastal-construction> and <http://www.region2coastal.com/Sandy>.