



Frequently Asked Questions about Pre-Implementation Compliance Measures

October 4, 2024

Disclaimer: This FAQ is general guidance based on the information available to DLCDC staff at this time. It is not a DLCDC decision. It is not legal advice for any specific situation. Cities and counties should consult their legal counsel for advice on specific decisions.

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What are “Pre-Implementation Compliance Measures”?

In July 2024, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) sent a letter to cities and counties in Oregon instructing them to make short term changes to how the city or county regulates development

in flood hazard areas. FEMA describes these short-term actions as “pre-implementation” because they are occurring before FEMA fully implements long-term changes to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to comply with the Endangered Species Act.

What led up to PICM?

In 2009, environmental advocacy organizations sued the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) alleging that FEMA violated the Endangered Species Act by not consulting with National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) about how the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) could jeopardize threatened species. FEMA resolved the lawsuit by formally consulting with NMFS to review the impact of the NFIP. In April 2016, NMFS issued its [Biological Opinion](#) (BiOp) that concludes that the NFIP in Oregon jeopardizes the survival of several threatened species, including salmon, sturgeon, eulachon, and orcas. The BiOp contained a reasonable and prudent alternative (RPA) with recommendations from NMFS to FEMA on how to avoid jeopardizing the threatened species. In October 2021, FEMA issued a draft implementation plan on how to reduce the negative impacts of the NFIP on threatened species.

In 2023, FEMA started reviewing the draft implementation plan using a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, which is still underway. Under the NEPA process FEMA will analyze whether there are additional alternatives or changes to the 2021 draft implementation plan to consider.

In September 2023, environmental advocacy organizations filed a lawsuit alleging that FEMA has been too slow to implement the BiOp. Plaintiffs included the [Center for Biological Diversity](#), the [Northwest Environmental Defense Center](#), [Willamette Riverkeeper](#), and [The Conservation Angler](#). See also coverage in the [Oregonian](#).

In July 2024, FEMA announced a new program of pre-implementation compliance measures (PICM or short-term measures) for the BiOp, separate from the NEPA full implementation (long-term measures) process. FEMA hosted four [PICM webinars](#) in July and August, and is planning additional outreach to assist NFIP communities in the fall of 2024. Some of the PICM pathways are included in the 2016 BiOp under RPA, element 2.

FEMA now has two separate, but similar processes: NEPA evaluation of the full implementation plan, and interim action through PICM. FEMA’s webpage [“Endangered Species Act Integration in Oregon”](#) contains information about both processes, but does not clearly distinguish between the two processes.

What is the role of the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development in PICM?

FEMA and the state provide funds to the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) for staff to help cities and counties participate in the NFIP. DLCD floodplain staff do not set program policies and cannot make decisions on behalf of FEMA. As FEMA provides more information about what they are requiring through PICM, DLCD floodplain staff will try to explain the program to cities and counties.

Frequently Asked Questions about Pre-Implementation Compliance Measures

While the floodplain staff at DLCD have a coordinating role communicating with FEMA, cities and counties are always free to communicate directly with FEMA staff. In this role, DLCD staff provided feedback on the full implementation plan (long-term measures) through the NEPA process. DLCD staff provided information about how the land use planning system in Oregon would affect the full implementation plan. DLCD did not have an opportunity to play a similar role while FEMA developed PICM.

On September 26, 2024, Governor Tina Kotek sent a [letter to FEMA](#) expressing concerns about PICM, similar to concerns raised in a [letter from members of congress](#) in August. DLCD will work with FEMA to address the governor's concerns.

What does a city or county need to do now?

FEMA is requiring cities and counties to select one of three PICM short-term paths by December 1, 2024:

- Pathway 1: Adopt the [PICM model floodplain management ordinance](#) that considers impacts to fish habitat and requires mitigation to a no net loss standard.
- Pathway 2: Review individual development proposals and require permit-by-permit habitat mitigation to achieve no net loss using "Floodplain Habitat Assessment and Mitigation" guidance from FEMA.
- Pathway 3: Prohibit all new development in the floodplain.

FEMA is also requiring cities and counties to gather additional data on local floodplain permitting starting January 31, 2025, and submit an annual report to FEMA starting January 2026.

If a city or county does not choose a PICM path by December 1, 2024, then FEMA expects the city or county to use Pathway 2 for permit-by-permit habitat assessment and mitigation.

Once local planning staff review the FEMA documents ([PICM model ordinance](#) and [habitat assessment guidance](#)), planning staff may want to discuss the PICM paths with other internal local staff, and their local legal counsel. A starting point could be to determine how much developable land is within the Special Floodplain Hazard Area (SFHA). With that data to inform local decision making, staff might want to report to decision makers and the public explaining the situation and may find this FAQ useful as background. An informational work-session could be helpful to explore options for what may or may not work at the local level. DLCD staff ([regional representatives](#) and [flood hazards staff](#)) are available for technical assistance; however, many questions will need to go to FEMA. Use the dedicated email address: FEMA-R10-MIT-PICM@fema.dhs.gov.

Does Pathway 3 "Prohibit floodplain development" require a moratorium?

No. A city or county has at least two options for prohibiting development in the special flood hazard area: temporary moratorium or permanent rezoning.

Option A: Temporary Moratorium

[ORS 197.520 to 197.540](#) defines a process for a city or county to declare a moratorium to temporarily prevent all development in a specific area. Typically, a city or county would declare a moratorium where there are insufficient public facilities, which would not apply in this case. ORS 197.520(3) allows a different type of moratorium if a city or county demonstrates there is a compelling need based on the findings below:

For urban or urbanizable land:

- That application of existing development ordinances or regulations and other applicable law is inadequate to prevent irrevocable public harm from development in affected geographical areas;
- That the moratorium is sufficiently limited to ensure that a needed supply of affected housing types and the supply of commercial and industrial facilities within or in proximity to the city or county are not unreasonably restricted by the adoption of the moratorium;
- Stating the reasons alternative methods of achieving the objectives of the moratorium are unsatisfactory;
- That the city or county has determined that the public harm which would be caused by failure to impose a moratorium outweighs the adverse effects on other affected local governments, including shifts in demand for housing or economic development, public facilities and services and buildable lands, and the overall impact of the moratorium on population distribution; and
- That the city or county proposing the moratorium has determined that sufficient resources are available to complete the development of needed interim or permanent changes in plans, regulations or procedures within the period of effectiveness of the moratorium.

For rural land:

- That application of existing development ordinances or regulations and other applicable law is inadequate to prevent irrevocable public harm from development in affected geographical areas;
- Stating the reasons alternative methods of achieving the objectives of the moratorium are unsatisfactory;
- That the moratorium is sufficiently limited to ensure that lots or parcels outside the affected geographical areas are not unreasonably restricted by the adoption of the moratorium; and
- That the city or county proposing the moratorium has developed a work plan and time schedule for achieving the objectives of the moratorium.

Moratoriums are legally complicated. This description is only a summary of the law. A city or county should consult carefully with their legal counsel to determine whether and how a moratorium would work in their specific situation, and to review the applicable timelines for which a moratorium may be in place and circumstances for extending a moratorium.

Option B: Permanent Rezoning

A city or county could permanently rezone the land within the special flood hazard area to a zone that would not permit development. This would not be appropriate for all cities and counties, but could be appropriate if the area in the SFHA is relatively small, unlikely to develop, or publicly owned.

Is a “Measure 56 Notice” required for PICM short-term options?

Most likely yes, but cities and counties should consult with their legal counsel on how the notification requirements apply in the specific local circumstances.

Background on Measure 56 Notices

Cities and counties in Oregon are required to send a notice to landowners before “rezoning” property. This requirement was originally enacted through Ballot Measure 56 in 1998, and is codified in [Oregon Revised Statutes \(ORS\) 227.186](#) for cities and [ORS 215.503](#) for counties. The requirement uses a broad definition of rezoning that includes any change that “limits or prohibits land uses previously allowed.” DLCDC maintains a [webpage on the landowner notification requirement](#).

Pathway 1 – Model ordinance

Cities and counties staff should carefully review current zoning and development regulations for property within the SFHA. If properties are zoned for open space or conservation, then the [PICM model ordinance](#) might not further limit uses.

If properties are zoned for residential, commercial or industrial use, the [PICM model ordinance](#) would likely limit those uses, and the Measure 56 notification requirement could apply. Most local floodplain codes require owners to obtain a permit for development in the floodplain. Permit processing varies for each city or county. Oregon’s model floodplain Ordinance (version 2020) meets minimum NFIP standards. However, the updated [PICM model ordinance](#) contains new standards in section 6.0 (highlighted in yellow) which could limit currently allowed uses, in which case the Measure 56 notification requirement would apply.

Pathway 2 – Permit-by-permit habitat assessment and mitigation

Cities and counties should carefully review any existing requirements for habitat mitigation. Most cities and counties do not require mitigation for habitat impacts, so the city or county would be adopting a new ordinance to require assessment and mitigation for development in flood hazard areas. These new development regulations would most likely limit currently allowed uses, and thus the Measure 56 notification requirement would apply.

Pathway 3 – Prohibit floodplain development

If a city or county declares a temporary moratorium under ORS 197.520 to 197.540, then the Measure 56 notification requirements would likely apply because a moratorium would limit or prohibit uses that would otherwise be allowed.

If a city or county rezones land or amends development regulations to permanently prohibit development within the SFHA, then the city or county should carefully review the previous zoning and allowed uses for each parcel. If some properties were previously zoned for open space or conservation, then the prohibition on development is not likely to be a limitation on future use. If some properties are zoned for residential, commercial or industrial use, then the prohibition on development would limit those uses, and thus the Measure 56 notification requirement would apply.

A city or county may not want to completely prohibit all development in the floodplain and may want to think about explicitly adding in activities exempt from the no net loss standards as listed in section 6.3 of the [PICM Model Ordinance](#). Some of the exempt activities include normal maintenance of structures, street repairs, habitat restoration activities, routine agricultural practices, and normal maintenance of above ground utilities and would still require a local floodplain development permit. However, if a city or county wishes to include activities beyond those listed in section 6.3, then the city or county will likely need to adopt the model ordinance or require permit-by-permit habitat mitigation for the uses that are still allowed. It may be simpler to choose pathway 1 (model ordinance) or pathway 2 (permit-by-permit) instead. Cities and counties should communicate with FEMA about any exemptions.

Will the state waive legislative adoption requirements?

Each city or county has its own requirements for adopting an ordinance. The state has no authority to waive those requirements.

[ORS 197.610 through 197.625](#) requires cities and counties to submit notice to DLCDC 35 days before the first hearing to adopt a change to a comprehensive plan or a land use regulation. The statute does not authorize DLCDC to waive this requirement. If it is not possible to send the notice 35 days prior to the hearing, cities and counties should send the notice as soon as possible. The notice can include a draft ordinance that will be revised before adoption. If a city or county does not provide notice 35 days prior to the hearing, this does not invalidate the ordinance. A party that did not appear before the local government in the proceedings would be allowed to appeal the ordinance.

DLCDC has no authority to waive the required Measure 56 notification to landowners that is described above.

What if a city or county cannot complete the ordinance process by December 1, 2024?

Start the process of evaluating the PICM pathways as soon as possible. Keep FEMA informed via their PICM inbox FEMA-R10-MIT-PICM@fema.dhs.gov regarding your PICM path and progress.

Send questions to FEMA early in the process to give them time to respond, and document when replies are received.

Communicate often to FEMA to update them on your status and expected adoption date.

Is the model ordinance clear & objective?

Background on Clear and Objective Standards

Oregon Revised Statutes [197A.400](#) requires cities and counties to:

“adopt and apply only clear and objective standards, conditions and procedures *regulating the development of housing*, including needed housing, on land within an urban growth boundary.”
[emphasis added.]

The legislature amended this statute to include areas within unincorporated communities and rural residential zones. The amendment takes effect on July 1, 2025.

Reviewing Model Ordinances

DLCD plans to review the existing [Oregon Model Flood Hazard Ordinance](#) to identify standards for residential development that may not be clear and objective. Over the past year, DLCD also reviewed an early draft of the model ordinance in the NEPA process for the full implementation of the BiOp. DLCD identified several aspects of that early draft model ordinance that may not be clear and objective and suggested that FEMA revise those aspects. DLCD has not yet determined whether the [PICM Model Ordinance](#) has only clear and objective standards.

What is changing for cities and counties for letters of map revision based on fill?

FEMA has temporarily suspended processing of applications for letters of map revision based on fill (LOMR-F) and conditional letters of map revision based on fill (CLOMR-F) as of **August 1, 2024**. FEMA is doing this to remove any perceived incentive to using fill and to avoid potentially negative effects on habitat for threatened species.

FEMA is not prohibiting fill in the SFHA, rather they are suspending the opportunity for owners or developers to revise floodplain maps to be released from mandatory flood insurance. Therefore, if fill is used for structure elevation and there is a federally backed mortgage on the property, flood insurance will still be required. Cities and counties should continue to enforce their existing floodplain ordinance on regulations regarding placement of fill in flood hazard areas.

[Frequently Asked Questions about Pre-Implementation Compliance Measures](#)

If an applicant asks for a community acknowledgement form (CAF) for a CLOMR-F or LOMR-F for a project not covered in the exceptions below, it would be wise to [contact FEMA](#) before signing.

Exceptions for L/CLOMR-F processing:

- Projects that are undergoing Section 7 consultation via an alternative federal nexus
- LOMR-Fs for already processed CLOMR-Fs
- CLOMRs required for habitat restoration projects

What are the Measure 49 implications to the PICM pathways?

Measure 49 could apply in some situations, but it is unlikely that a city or county would have to pay compensation to a landowner. Cities and counties should consult with their legal counsel to analyze their specific situation.

Background:

[Ballot Measure 49](#) was approved by Oregon voters in 2007. Its initial impact was on property owners who acquired their property before land use regulations were established in the 1970's and 1980's. In many cases, those owners were permitted to build up to three houses, even though the current zoning would not allow new houses.

Measure 49 also applies to future changes in land use regulations. Those provisions are codified in [ORS 195.300 to 195.336](#). If a state or local government enacts a land use regulation that restricts a residential use and reduces the fair market value of a property, then the owner can apply for just compensation. The compensation can be monetary, or a waiver to allow the owner to use the property without applying the new land use regulation. This requirement does not apply if the new regulation is for the protection of public health and safety.

Pathway 1 – Model ordinance

If a property owner applied for just compensation as a result of a city or county adopting the PICM model ordinance, the city or county would process the claim as provided in ORS 195.300 through 314. This includes evaluating the claim to determine whether it is valid, and then deciding whether to waive the regulation or pay monetary compensation.

First, determine whether the claimant owned the property before the city or county adopted the new regulations in the model ordinance.

Next determine whether the new regulations restrict the use of the property for single-family dwellings. The statute does not include a specific definition of “restrict” in this context. If the new ordinance has the effect of completely prohibiting residential use, then it clearly restricts the use. If the new ordinance allows single-family dwellings, but places design standards or conditions of development, these likely do not restrict the use.

Next, determine whether the regulations “restrict or prohibit activities for the protection of public health and safety” as provided in ORS 195.305(3)(b). Many aspects of regulating floodplains are based on safety; however, some of the regulations in the [PICM model ordinance](#) are based on improving fish habitat. This could result in complicated analysis to determine whether the habitat requirements restrict development beyond the restriction already created by regulations based on safety.

Next, review the property appraisals submitted by the claimant to determine whether the property value was actually reduced. Property in a flood hazard area may already have a low value. The property may still have value for agricultural use which would offset the loss due to the regulation.

If a property owner has a valid claim, then the city or county would decide to pay monetary compensation or to waive some regulations. The city or county is not required to waive all regulations, only “to the extent necessary to offset the reduction in the fair market value of the property” ORS 195.310(6)(b). The city or county could still apply regulations based on safety, and could still apply regulations that existed prior to adopting the [PICM model ordinance](#).

Pathway 2 – Permit-by-permit habitat assessment and mitigation

The results would be similar to pathway 1. In most cases the habitat mitigation requirement would not prevent development, and the owner would likely not be entitled to just compensation. If the habitat mitigation requirements did prevent development, then the owner could apply for just compensation. The city or county would use the steps described above to determine whether it is a valid claim, and decide to waive some of the requirements, or pay monetary compensation.

Pathway 3 – Prohibit floodplain development

A temporary moratorium would likely not lead to a claim for just compensation because it is not a new land use regulation. Also, a temporary moratorium is unlikely to significantly affect fair market value because potential buyers know that the moratorium will end.

Rezoning to prohibit all development within the SFHA would likely be a basis for a claim for just compensation, especially for a property entirely within the SFHA. If a property includes area inside and outside the SFHA, and the owner could still develop the same number of dwellings in a different location, then the owner would likely not be able to make a claim for just compensation.

The city or county would use the steps described above to determine whether it is a valid claim, and decide to waive some of the requirements, or pay monetary compensation.

Where can I find additional information or ask questions about PICM?

FEMA has a webpage for [Endangered Species Act Integration in Oregon](#). Email questions to the PICM email address: FEMA-R10-MIT-PICM@fema.dhs.gov.

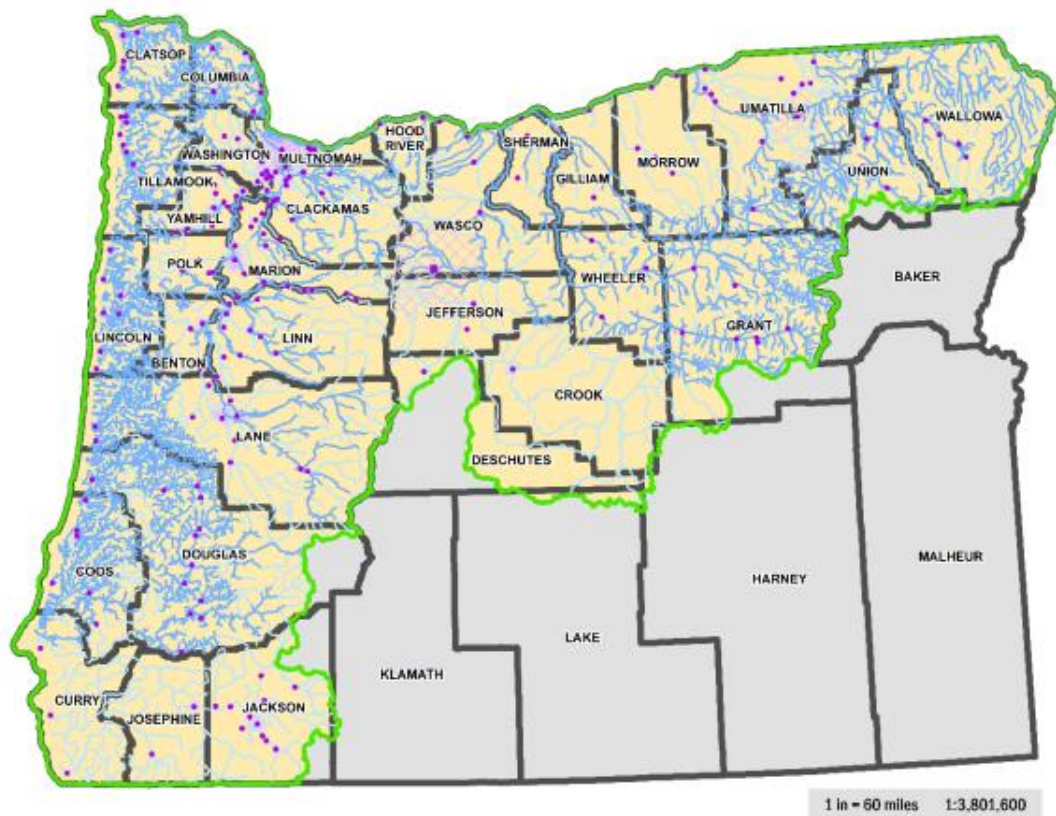
While DLCD staff are not responsible for PICM implementation, we are available to offer technical assistance. Email or call Oregon’s NFIP Coordinator at DLCD, Deanna Wright, deanna.wright@dlcd.oregon.gov, 971-718-7473.

What if a city or county received a PICM letter in error, or did not receive a PICM letter?

Staff may contact FEMA’s PICM inbox at: FEMA-R10-MIT-PICM@fema.dhs.gov to receive the letter, or you may contact DLCD staff. FEMA staff sent the email announcements to the city or county floodplain staff and the letter was mailed to each individual city or county chief elected officer. If you believe your community is outside of the BiOp action area (map instructions below), but you received a PICM letter, please contact FEMA PICM inbox for verification.

What area does the BiOp cover?

Below is a snapshot image of the Oregon NFIP BiOp Action Area:



OREGON NFIP BIOP ACTION AREA

2021.09.28

The BiOp is applicable in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) within the mapped salmon recovery domains for Oregon communities that participate in the NFIP. The BiOp covers approximately 90 percent of participating Oregon NFIP communities but does not apply to five counties.

[NOAA Fisheries GIS mapping application tool](#)

FEMA has published [directions](#) on how to determine if a proposed development or project area is within the BiOp area.