

FEMA changes flow, flood maps

Thousands could ditch unnecessary insurance

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ALBUQUERQUE (KRQE) - Thousands of New Mexican's and Millions of American's could be getting a break on their next insurance bill after a local congressman pointed out a loose regulation by a federal agency.

Since Hurricane Katrina ravished levees in New Orleans, the Federal Emergency Management Agency started to look at flood plain maps across the country. If there was a levee bordering a river that wasn't adequate, FEMA instituted a "Without Levee" policy that acted like it didn't exist.

"They sort of took an all or nothing approach and we're saying go back and actually evaluate what the risk is in various areas and take action based on what that is," said Representative Martin Heinrich (D-New Mexico).

"The levees and channels still provide flood control, and there isn't a problem. But on paper fema is saying there is a problem," said South Valley resident and Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority Engineer Jerry Lovato.

Lovato says the flood control authority has been trying to get FEMA to changes it's new policy and new maps for at least three years.

The new maps forced thousands of people in New Mexico and Millions across the country to get flood insurance even though they didn't need it according to old maps.

"It's a huge burden for someone who's not in a high risk area to carry that flood insurance," said

Heinrich wrote a letter to the head of FEMA last month and got a letter back last week saying the agency would re-analyze it's "without levees" policy. Which Heinrich says, will let those with "unnecessary" insurance drop that policy.

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