

Cyndie Martel

From: John Crane <johncranefilms@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 9, 2025 1:42 PM
To: Julie McMillan; Elizabeth Robbins; Teri Dowling; Mathew Salter; Bill Kircher; townocouncil@townofross.gov; Cyndie Martel
Cc: Christa Johnson; Christa Johnson
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda #12 : November 13th, 2025 Ross Town Council Meeting

November 9, 2025

Dear Mayor and Town Council

RE: Agenda #12 : November 13th, 2025 Ross Town Council Meeting

Contrary to the strategy currently being pursued by the District, FEMA makes it clear that communities must present flood risk information that is correct and up-to-date: *"The flood hazard maps must present flood risk information that is correct and up to date to ensure that they provide a sound basis for floodplain management and insurance rating."*

Please see my letter below with the appropriate citations, that was originally sent to the Town of Ross on August 5, 2025.

Updating the flood maps after the removal of BB2 is not only counter intuitive, but increases the risk of liability to the Town. Richard Simonitch, James Reilly, and Roger Leventhal have all made it clear that the discrepancies between FEMA 1 D model and the Steton 1 D / 2 D models are more than 3 feet. That is a huge difference and as a result a huge risk. A risk that should not be taken. Their letters are in my August 5th letter below.

In addition, the District has falsely claimed that *"no dry properties experience new flooding."* They also have claimed that these homes have NFIP / FEMA claims and losses on the record. I have asked the District for a list of properties and documentation supporting these claims and have received nothing. However, An Bartlett sent a letter on October 1, 2025 admitting: *"There is no list."*

This is the type of deliberate misinformation coupled with Tracy Clay's November 9, 2024 lying to the Flood Zone 9 Advisory Board about having *"met with every single homeowner that's completed and based on that, no mitigation is required."* has undermined the credibility and trustworthiness of the District. This was an outrageous lie, and yet it is only one of many claims that are undocumented and unsupported.

I hope the Town Council will not approve any action that advances a project based on falsehoods, and lies. Residents deserve better.

Respectfully,

John Crane

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **John Crane** <johncranefilms@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Aug 5, 2025 at 4:10 PM

Subject: "THE FLOOD HAZARD MAPS MUST PRESENT FLOOD RISK INFORMATION THAT IS CORRECT AND UP TO DATE..."

TO: Mayor and Town Council
Christa Johnson, Town Manager
Town of Ross
FROM: John Crane
DATE: 8.5.25

RE: "THE FLOOD HAZARD MAPS MUST PRESENT FLOOD RISK INFORMATION THAT IS CORRECT AND UP TO DATE..."

On the FEMA website there is a section that is very clear as to how the Process to Revise a Map works: "COMMUNITY-INITIATED MAP REVISIONS." It states:

"The flood hazard maps must present flood risk information that is correct and up to date to ensure that they provide a sound basis for floodplain management and insurance rating. FEMA relies heavily on communities to provide notification of changing flood hazard information and to submit the technical support data needed to reflect the updated flood hazards on the NFIP maps."

Also on the FEMA website under Flood Maps there are clear instructions as to how to "CHANGE YOUR FLOOD ZONE DESIGNATION." The guidelines below are clear.

Flood Maps Are A Collaboration Between Your Community And FEMA

Updates to flood maps are a collaboration between your community and FEMA. Every community that participates in the National Flood Insurance Program has a **floodplain administrator** who works with FEMA during the mapping process.

This seems very clear: Towns that participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) have a responsibility to FEMA to ensure their flood maps are accurate and up to date. The Town of Ross must set the record straight.

Hydrological Model Understates Flood Risk by More Than Three Feet for CLOMR

I am curious if the Town Council is aware that FEMA's outdated 1D hydrological model predicts significantly lower flood levels than the District's updated 1D/2D model? And if council members are aware that the discrepancy between the FEMA and District flood models is more than three feet.

Three engineers have informed the District of this: **James Reilly Stetson Engineers, Richard Simonich, Public Works Director/Engineer, Town of Ross, Roger Leventhal. P.W. Senior Engineer, Marin DPW**

Their letters go back to 2018 and were obtained in a Public Records Request and the complete letters are attached.

James Reilly Stetson Engineers

Stetson Principal Engineer James Reilly's email to Liz Lewis, Project Manager, dated June 2018, stated that FEMA models: *"may give property owners an unrealistic assessment of their flood risk."* This means the ***flood risk is higher*** than FEMA identifies.

Richard Simonich, Public Works Director/Engineer, Town of Ross

Richard Simonich, Public Works Director/Engineer, Town of Ross, sent an email to Berenice Davidson, Rosemarie Gaglione, and Hugh Davis on January 8, 2024, which identifies discrepancies are ***between 2.5-3.9 feet lower*** as Richard has identified.

Roger Leventhal. P.W. Senior Engineer, Marin DPW

This information had also been previously identified by Roger Leventhal. P.W. Senior Engineer, Marin DPW, in his June 9, 2023, email to Eric Simmons at FEMA. *"I am helping my folks out in our Ross Valley zone with the FEMA issues around removing Building Bridge 2 (I think they have spoken with you). As you may recall, we have a newer 2D RAS model that is more accurate but gives very different model results (almost 3 feet difference in WSE) then the effective model."*

There is no justification for ignoring the fact that FEMA's 1D hydrologic model is severely outdated and fails to accurately reflect the current flood risks. This serious problem is compounded by repeated surveys showing different results through the years. My home at 86 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard has gone from needing to be raised to meaningless superficial mitigation measures. And I am not alone. The survey measurements in the MT-2 application are different from the results taken when the survey was done. Those results will be detailed in a subsequent letter.

Structure No-Impact Certification Signed Despite BFE Increases

On page 77 of the MT-2 Application for BB2 there is the required Structure No-Impact Certification signed by Bernice Davidson certifying: *"no structures are located in areas that would be impacted by base flood elevations increases."* This simply is not true and there are impacts and numerous documented BFE increases in the same document. My home is just one of them. (Please see attached Certification)

If this is correct, this is a serious breach of ethics and trust. It is reason enough to throw the CLOMR out, and at the very least Town Council should refer this to the Town attorney without delay for guidance and advice.

It is unacceptable to risk the security and value of residents' most important

asset—their homes—by relying on a model that is known to be flawed. The Town Council must take immediate and decisive action to ensure our community is protected by accurate, up-to-date information.

Let's update the maps first, ensuring we have the most reliable data, before making any decisions about changes such as removing BB2.

Knowingly Using a Flawed Model is Indefensible

By moving ahead with a model that clearly understates flood risk, the District is not only increasing risk for property owners but also exposing the Towns to significant liability. To knowingly endorse a model that experts agree is inaccurate would be an act of gross negligence. With these problems acknowledged in the public record, advancing the CLOMR based on such information would be inexcusable and indefensible.

The Town Must Take an Active Role

It is essential that our Floodplain Administrator, Richard Simonitch, play an active role in the remapping of FEMA's floodplain maps. His expertise and straightforward oversight are precisely what FEMA and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) both expect and require from local leaders. The Town of Ross should use his vast experience to save the Town from an irreversible and catastrophic mistake.

The Town Council should direct Richard to uphold **FEMA's core values of compassion, fairness, integrity, and respect**—qualities that have been notably lacking in the District's handling of this issue, which seems to prioritize bureaucratic convenience over residents' rights and safety.

The District's current approach appears to be manipulating FEMA's process rather than providing real protection for property owners. This is completely at odds with the spirit of FEMA core values. The District's malfeasance towards impacted property owners is evident and documented in the public record.

There is no other responsible option: We must revise the flood maps now. The current CLOMR is not sound—it is deeply flawed. Let us work transparently with FEMA, through our trusted Floodplain Administrator, to create accurate maps. This is the only logical and responsible starting point.

Only then should we move forward.

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