Floodplain Management (EO 11988) Plan
Introduction & Overview
The purpose of Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, is “to avoid to the extent possible the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with occupancy and modification of floodplains and to avoid direct or indirect support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative.” This report contains the analysis prescribed by 24 CFR Part 55.

This project involves U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant Program – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding for business rehabilitation and mitigation for a single business impacted by Hurricane Irene. The analysis that follows focuses on floodplain impacts, as there are no direct wetland impacts associated with this project. Based on the “non-substantial” level of work, and other case characteristics, it is concluded that there is a reasonable basis to proceed with funding for this project/activity within the floodplain. Moreover, in the March 5, 2013 Federal Register Notice, HUD expressly recognized that “without the return of businesses and jobs to a disaster-impacted area, recovery may be impossible. Therefore, HUD strongly encourages grantees to envision economic revitalization as a cornerstone to a long-term recovery” (78 FR 14335). Thus, alternatives preventing or impeding small business recovery are not considered reasonable alternatives.

Description of Proposed Action & Land Use
Natasha and Drew Shuster dba Catskill Mountain Country Store (Applicant) is located at 5510 State Route 23 in the Town of Windham, Greene County, New York (Subject Property). The business is owned by Natasha and Drew Shuster and includes a café, country store, greenhouse, souvenir shop and looking zoo. Based on County Assessment data, this commercial property is Section 78.18, Block 1, Lots 32, 38.2, and 49. The Property Descriptions shows a 3.5-acre project area. This commercial property is located west of the Catskill State Park.

The proposed support involves a limited grant award of $100,000.00 in reimbursement for completed construction-related activities and mitigation. Completed construction-related activities and mitigation include the following: stabilizing the building; raising the rear portion of the main store structure to remove the damaged foundation and installing a new foundation; installing flood proof insulation in the floor; replacing the heating and cooling system and hot water tank; and removing sheetrock, electrical and plumbing infrastructure, flooring, floor joists, sub floor, footings, cracked concrete pads, a partially collapsed deck, cracked chimney, and a 10-foot by 24-foot breezeway. Additionally, the barn was moved to a higher elevation on the property from on-grade to an area where previous outbuildings were located. A previous environmental review for non-construction activities associated with working capital are categorized under 24 CFR 58.35(b)(4), was completed for this Applicant on July 14, 2016, and is included in the environmental review record.

Applicable Regulatory Procedure Per EO 11988
The proposed action corresponds with a noncritical action not excluded under 24 CFR §55.12(b) or (c). Funding is permissible for the use in the floodplain if the proposed action is processed under §55.20 and the findings of the determination are affirmative to suggest that the project may proceed.

Based on online data, including data managed and updated by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), there is an intermittent riverine adjacent to the north of the project area. However, the scope of work included repairs to a previously developed property and existing structures. Thus, there was no direct construction (new or existing) in
wetlands present adjacent to the Subject Property. Thus, in accordance with the decision-making process set forth in 24 CFR Part 55, this analysis focuses exclusively on floodplains.

According to 24 CFR §55, the activity that repaired and mitigated impacted building(s) and/ or structure(s) occurred in a community that is in the regular program of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the community is currently in good standing. However, based on the total amount of damage reported after Hurricane Irene, this project exceeds a substantial improvement threshold of 50% in 24 CFR §55.2(b)(10). This is evidenced by Program materials indicating the full market value of the three parcels is $526,000. As such, the full eight-step floodplain determination process in §55.20 is required. The following analysis examines each step in a floodplain management determination process.

**Step 1. Determine Whether the Proposed Action is Located in the 100-year Floodplain (500-year for Critical Actions) or results in New Construction in Wetlands.**

The location of the proposed action, per the applicable FEMA flood map Firmette, is within the 100-year floodplain (SFHA - AE Zone). Portions of the Subject Property near State Route 23 are located within floodway, but all project activities and building structures are located outside of the floodway. In addition, the barn was moved to a higher elevation on the property. There is an established Base Flood Elevation (BFE) of approximately 1,497 to 1,499 feet across the property. This action does not require a Section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act (see 55.20(a)(1)).

**Step 2. Initiate Public Notice for Early Review of Proposal.**

Because the proposed project is located in floodplain, the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) published an early notice that allowed for public and public agency input on the decision to provide funding for reconstruction and development activities. The early public notice and 15-day comment period is complete. No public comments were received.

The early notice and corresponding 15-day public comment period started on December 27, 2016 with the "Notice of Early Public Review of a Proposed Activity in 100-Year Floodplain" being published in Daily Mail newspaper, with the 15-day period expiring on January 11, 2017. The notice targeted local residents, including those in the floodplain. The notice was also sent to the following state and federal agencies on December 27, 2016: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); USFWS; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); NYSDEC; and New York State Office of Emergency Management. The notice was also sent to Greene County and the Town of Windham. (See Attachments 1 and 2 of this EO 11988 Floodplain Management Determination for the letter distributed to these agencies and the associated newspaper notice affidavit).

**Step 3. Identify and Evaluate Practicable Alternatives to Locating the Proposed Action in a 100-year Floodplain (or 500-year Floodplain if a Critical Action) or Wetland.**

The Program is structured to provide eligible businesses with loan or grant assistance for activities necessary to restore storm-damaged businesses, including through damage reimbursements, and support for rehabilitation, reconstruction, elevation, and/ or other mitigation activities. This small business suffered substantial damage during Hurricane Irene, as such potential alternatives must be considered in order to try and mitigate the amount of damage from future flood events.

One potential alternative is to relocate the business out of the 100-year floodplain; however, the relocation of this family-owned business could pose a great hardship on the Applicant. The Catskill Mountain Country Store was opened in 1994 with a small store that sold local crafts, fresh produce, gourmet foods, and baked goods made from Pop Pop Siegfried’s recipes (Natasha’s Great Grandpop). The Windham Garden Center was purchased in 1995 and the family added a garden center, looking zoo and walking paths. The Catskill Mountain Country Store serves local and regional recreational and tourism demand and is a type of open
land use that could be a compatible form of floodplain development. As such, relocation is not considered a viable option.

Another alternative would be for no action to occur, meaning the Applicant would not be receiving grant funds to restore and sustain this business. This option means there would be a potential inability for the business to survive rebuilding after the storms. Furthermore, the ability for the owner to successfully mitigate any future damages from floods would be impeded due to the lack of financial support; which means the property would be more vulnerable. This could greatly impact this business and the surrounding community, as recovery would be greatly impaired due to lack of support. Accordingly, the ‘no action’ decision would neither support this business’s recovery nor help the community recover from the devastating storms.

The above identified alternatives will be re-evaluated in response to public comments received.

**Step 4. Identify & Evaluate Potential Direct & Indirect Impacts Associated with Occupancy or Modification of 100-year Floodplain and Potential Direct & Indirect Support of Floodplain Development that Could Result from Proposed Action.**

The focus of floodplain evaluation should be on adverse impacts to lives and property, and on natural and beneficial floodplain values. Natural and beneficial values include consideration of potential for adverse impacts on water resources such as natural moderation of floods, water quality maintenance, and groundwater recharge.

According to the FEMA Report - *A Unified National Program for Floodplain Management*, two definitions commonly used in evaluating actions in a floodplain are “structural” and “non-structural” activities. Per the report, structural activity is usually intended to mean adjustments that modify the behavior of floodwaters through the use of measures such as public works dams, levees and channel work. Non-structural is usually intended to include all other adjustments (e.g., regulations, insurance, etc.) in the way society acts when occupying or modifying a floodplain. These definitions are used in describing impacts that may arise in association with potential advancement of this case.

**Natural moderation of floods**

As the Applicant’s property is one of many developed parcels situated within the 100-year floodplain, the continued occupancy may potentially result in future direct impacts to property during certain severe floods and related natural disasters. However, the direct effects to this property would be no greater than those expected to the other adjacent occupied properties within this floodplain.

**Living resources such as flora and fauna**

This land use may constitute a type of business where, after flooding, materials used in operations could potentially be released into the environment, thereby having unquantifiable potential to impact water quality maintenance and ecological resources. A potential impact that may arise is that materials used or stored on-site would be caused to be released into the environment, such as a result of wind or floodwaters. However, this would be more likely if there are not non-structural and structural floodproofing techniques in place, such as if materials are not stored in water-tight containers, and/or said containers break or migrate out of a non-enclosed building due to lack of proper preparation. A qualitative evaluation suggests the potential would be relatively small and if such releases do occur, it is likely as part of a potential area-wide impact. In such an instance, floatable debris could contribute to litter and if there were minor amounts of chemicals used on the Subject Property, floodwaters may induce rapid dilution. Given the nature of this business, the potential for an acute or chronic level of water quality impact from the Subject Property is low.

**Impacts to Property & Lives**

The action does present potential to impact commercial occupancy of the floodplain, but it does not impact
residential structures or directly cause modification of the 100-year floodplain. The project does not alter the floodplain because it does not in any way directly or physically modify the floodplain through new ground disturbance – the project was within previously developed footprints only. Moreover, supporting the recovery of small businesses is an essential component of recovery in storm-effected communities, as recognized by the March 5, 2013 Federal Register Notice.

The Subject Property offers a café, country store, greenhouse, souvenir shop and small looking zoo in a mixed commercial and residential area of Windham, New York. According to Greene County’s Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2009, 3.1% of the population (page 5.4.1-56) and 3.3% of the improved property of Windham is located in the 100-year floodplain (page 5.4.1-62), and 3.3% of the land is in High or Moderate Flood Risk (page 5.4.1-62). Considering the context of the area, this action represents an activity at only two parcels among others that are located within the contiguous floodplain. Thus, funding this project/activity does constitute indirect continued support of floodplain occupancy and development for this business. In the event of severe flooding and associated natural hazards in the future, there is potential for further damage to this property, business disruption, and impacts to this small business.

The predominantly in-kind and in-place rehabilitation of the Subject Property sustains area property values and community character within a developed district. It enables continued viability of this small business, which might otherwise degrade, or cease to exist, without support in rehabilitating facilities, restarting business operations, and/or recouping some revenue lost as a result of the disaster. Similarly, the proposed investment supports the area by sustaining an asset. With sustained operations here, the market is not disrupted in that customers are required to travel greater distances. Support to sustain this business also helps ensure a diverse economic base. If this project were not funded, there probably would be other undefined, undesirable indirect impacts to lives and the area economy, on a short- and long-term basis, such as relating to economic multipliers and support that this business provides to surrounding businesses, as it purchases products and services.

Cultural resources such as archaeological, historic & recreational aspects
The impacted property is older than 50 years of age. There are no recorded historic properties listed on or deemed eligible for the State and National Register of Historic Places adjacent to the Subject Property. The New York State Historic Preservation Office confirmed on August 8, 2016 that this project had no effect on historic resources. Without support, building resources could degrade and there could be loss of development character and identity for this family business and the area.

According to the Outdoor Industry Association’s two-page fact sheet New York: The Outdoor Recreation Economy, outdoor recreation generates $33.8 Billion in consumer spending and 305,000 direct jobs within the State. This is an important sector of the regional economy and the subject business is an example of a constituent part of this aspect of the economic base. It is presumed that market demand for restaurant and souvenir shops are strong and if the service here were disrupted, consumer demand could not easily shift to other facilities located in the floodplain because of finite supply.

Agricultural, aquacultural, & forestry resources
The Greene County area has several agricultural sites located in the flood zone, as well as undeveloped woodlands. There is substantial agriculture/livestock and forestry industry in Greene County. According to the Greene County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan (2002), agriculture/livestock generated sales of $8,781,000 in 1997, and $2,123,318 in 1996. It is possible that if there is a materials release from this property, it could potentially affect natural resources including agricultural and forestry. However, while it is conceivable that flooding of a business like this could be part of a cumulative influence on such resources, the impact attributable to this use could not have been quantitatively derived, and the potential impact, with planning for and practice of non-structural management practices, is considered minor.
Step 5. Where Practicable, Design or Modify the Proposed Action to Minimize the Potential Adverse Impacts To and From the 100-Year Floodplain and to Restore and Preserve its Natural and Beneficial Functions and Values.

Given that proposed rehabilitation and mitigation funded by this Program is limited and does not rise to the level of substantial reconstruction, and considering the individual property scale, it is not financially feasible to specify mitigation measures such as elevating the building, dry floodproofing it, or promoting strategic retreat such as through government acquisition. However, it is reasonable to promote business owner awareness of future risks of natural hazards, including flooding, plus the physical, social and economic impacts that potential events could convey, including through potential for future physical damage to property, buildings, supplies, and equipment.

It is reasonable to promote business owner awareness of actions they can take to define and prepare for the impacts of many hazards they may face. There are free resources available to aid such preparedness planning found at the link: http://www.ready.gov/business.


The action to fund rehabilitation, mitigation and business continuity at this small business is still practicable in light of exposure to flood hazards in the floodplain, possible adverse impacts on the floodplain, the extent to which it may aggravate current hazards to other floodplains, and the potential to disrupt natural and beneficial functions and values of floodplains. Moreover, the March 5, 2013 Federal Register Notice strongly recommends that the grantee engage in a robust policy for ensuring small business recovery affected by the storm events, as such recovery is essential to the continued vitality of surrounding communities. Thus, alternatives preventing or impeding small business recovery are not considered reasonable alternatives.


A final notice, formally known as “Notice of Policy Determination” was published in accordance with 24 CFR 55. (See Attachments 3 of this Floodplain Management EO 11988 Determination for the letter distributed to the associated agencies and the associated newspaper notice affidavit). The 7-day comment period started with the Final Notice and Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds publishing in the Daily Mail newspaper on January 13, 2017. All comments must be received on or before 5:00 PM on January 20, 2017 or they will not be considered.


The Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR), operating under the auspices of the New York State Homes and Community Renewal’s (NYSHCR) Housing Trust Fund Corporation, is the responsible entity. The responsible entity will make available educational materials regarding best practices for businesses located in floodplains. It will also require the business to demonstrate proof of current flood insurance. It is acknowledged there is a continuing responsibility by the responsible entity to ensure, to the extent feasible and necessary, compliance with the steps herein.
Attachment 1

Notice of Early Public Review
Floodplain Management
Executive Order 11988
EARLY NOTICE OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY
IN A 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN

NATASHA AND DREW SHUSTER DBA CATSKILL MOUNTAIN COUNTRY STORE
5510 STATE ROUTE 23 IN THE TOWN OF WINDHAM
GREENE COUNTY, NEW YORK

DECEMBER 27, 2016

To: All interested Agencies, Groups, and Individuals

This is to give notice that the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR), an office of the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC), has received a request to use Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding from the NY Rising Small Business Recovery Program to implement repairs and mitigation the Natasha and Drew Shuster dba Catskill Mountain Country Store (hereinafter, the “Proposed Activity”) and is conducting an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988 and Executive Order 11990 in accordance with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Renewal (HUD) regulations (24 CFR Part 55). There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, to provide the public an opportunity to express their concerns and share information about the Proposed Activity, including alternative locations outside of the floodplain. Second, adequate public notice is an important public education tool. The dissemination of information about floodplain facilitates and enhances governmental efforts to reduce the risks associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplain, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk. Funding for the Proposed Activity will be provided by the HUD CDBG-DR program for storm recovery activities in New York State.

The Proposed Activity is needed to address the flooding which damaged the store structure, green house, and looking zoo during Hurricane Irene. The proposed activities are to repair existing structures and mitigate damage from future storm events.

The Proposed Activity entails completed construction-related activities and mitigation include stabilizing the building, raising the rear portion of the main store structure to remove the damaged foundation and installing a new foundation, installing flood proof insulation in the floor, replacing the heating and cooling system and hot water tank, and interior repairs. Additionally, the barn was moved to a higher elevation on the property from on-grade to an area where previous outbuildings were located.

The Proposed Activity will result in temporary impacts to 0.17 acres and permanent impacts to 0.04 acres of 100-Year Floodplain. The temporary impacts consisted of completed construction activities associated with removing the damaged foundation and installing a new foundation for the building. The permanent impacts were associated with the relocation of the barn to a higher elevation on the property. These completed construction activities resulted in minor temporary and permanent impacts to the floodplain.
Floodplain maps based on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps have been prepared and are available for review with additional information at: http://www.stormrecovery.ny.gov/environmental-docs.

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the Proposed Activity or request further information by contacting Lori A. Shirley, Certifying Officer, Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery, 38-40 State Street, Hampton Plaza, Albany, NY 12207; email: NYSCDBG_DR_ER@nyshcr.org. Standard office hours are 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. For more information, call (518) 474-0700. All comments received by January 11, 2017 will be considered.
Attachment 2

Notice of Early Public Review Affidavit
Floodplain Management
Executive Order 11988
COMBINED PUBLIC EXPLANATION OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS (NOI-RROF) Natasha and Drew Shuster dba Catskill Mountain Country Store (039-ED-33715-2013)

January 13, 2017

Name of Responsible Entity and Recipient: New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), 38-40 State Street, Hampton Plaza, Albany, NY 12207, in cooperation with the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation (HTFC), of the same address. Contact: Lori A. Shirley (518) 474-0755. The Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR), an office of HCR’s HTFC, is responsible for the direct administration of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program in New York State.

Pursuant to 24 CFR part 58 and 24 CFR part 55, this combined Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a Floodplain and Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds (NOIRROF) satisfies two separate procedural requirements for project activities proposed to be undertaken by HCR.

Project Description: GOSR proposes to provide HUD CDBG-DR funding to Natasha and Drew Shuster dba Catskill Mountain Country Store (039-ED-33715-2013), which is located at 5510 State Route 23 in the Town of Windham, Greene County, New York 12496 (the “Proposed Project”). HUD CDBG-DR funding of $100,000.00 is proposed for reimbursement of completed construction and mitigation related activities associated with damages from Hurricane Irene. These activities included repairs to existing structures, as well as relocating the barn to higher ground, and implementing flood-proofing measures to existing structures to mitigate damage from future storm events.

PUBLIC EXPLANATION OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN

This work was located in 100-year floodplain (SHFA Zone AE). There was no new building construction within the approximately one and a half (1.5) acres of floodplain on the Subject Property. Since the action exceeds the substantial damage threshold of 50% in 24 CFR §55.2(b)(10), Executive Order 11988 required that the project not be supported if there are practicable alternatives to development in floodplain.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplains and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment have an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, adequate public notice is an important public education tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplains can facilitate and enhance federal efforts to reduce the risks associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplains, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Public Review: Public viewing of the Floodplain Management Documents are available online at http://www.stormrecovery.ny.gov/environmental-docs and are also available in person Monday – Friday,
REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS AND CERTIFICATION

On or about January 23, 2017, the HCR certifying officer will submit a request and certification to HUD for the release of CDBG-DR funds appropriated under Public Law 113-2, as amended and as authorized by related laws and policies for the purpose of implementing the New York CDBG-DR Action Plan.

The Proposed Project is categorically excluded from the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) by HUD regulations at 24 C.F.R. Part 58. An Environmental Review Record (ERR) that documents the environmental determinations for this project is on file and available for review and copying in person Monday – Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM at the following address: Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery, 38-40 State Street, Hampton Plaza, Albany, NY 12207. Contact: Lori A. Shirley (518) 474-0755. The ERR is also available upon written request by post or email.

Public Review: Public viewing is available in person Monday – Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM at the following address: New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), 38-40 State Street, Hampton Plaza, Albany, NY 12207. Contact: Lori A. Shirley (518) 474-0755.

Further information or a copy of the ERR may be requested by writing to the above address, emailing NYSCDBG_DR_ER@nyshcr.org or by calling (518) 474-0755. This combined notice is being sent to individuals and groups known to be interested in these activities, local news media, appropriate local, state and federal agencies, the regional office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency having jurisdiction, and to the HUD Field Office, and is being published in a newspaper of general circulation in the affected community.

Public Comments on the Proposed Activity within 100-year Floodplain and/or NOIRROF: Any individual, group or agency may submit written comments on the Project. Comments should be submitted via email, in the proper format, on or before January 20, 2017 at NYSCDBG_DR_ER@nyshcr.org. Written comments may also be submitted at the following address, or by mail, in the proper format, to be received on or before January 20, 2017: Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery, 38-40 State Street, Hampton Plaza, Albany, NY 12207. Comments may be received by telephone by contacting Lori A. Shirley at (518) 474-0755. All comments must be received on or before 5:00 PM on January 20, 2017 or they will not be considered. If modifications result from public comment, these will be made prior to proceeding with the expenditure of funds.

HCR certifies to HUD that Lori A. Shirley, in her capacity as Certifying Officer, consents to accept the jurisdiction of the U.S. federal courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD’s approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities, and allows GOSR to use CDBG-DR program funds.

Objection to Release of Funds: HUD will accept objections to its release of funds and GOSR’s certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later). Potential objectors may contact HUD or the GOSR Certifying Officer to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

The only permissible grounds for objections claiming a responsible entity’s non-compliance with 24 CFR Part 58 are: (a) Certification was not executed by HCR’s Certifying Officer; (b) the responsible entity has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the responsible entity has committed funds or incurred costs not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before
release of funds and approval of environmental certification; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality.

Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58) and shall be addressed to Tennille Smith Parker, Director, Disaster Recovery and Special Issues Division, Office of Block Grant Assistance, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, 451 7th Street SW, Washington, DC 20410, Phone: (202) 402-4649.

Lori A. Shirley  
Certifying Officer  
January 13, 2017