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**GUIDANCE FOR DELINEATING HIGHEST HAZARD AREAS
FOR PURPOSES OF 301 CMR 11.01(2)(c)1.d.**

This Guidance sets forth the methodology for identifying the highest hazard area for the purpose of 301 CMR 11.02(2)(c)1.d.

The highest hazard area is defined as:

- the areas defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as V, Coastal A, and AO zones on a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM);
- floodways and parts of the Special Flood Hazard Area, as identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which are within 200 feet of select waterbodies, including rivers and streams;
- barrier beaches as defined by the Wetlands Protection Act Regulations at 310 CMR 10.29(2); and
- high erosion areas, defined as those areas within 200 feet of unconsolidated shorelines experiencing statistically significant rates of erosion or areas within 200 feet of unconsolidated shorelines abutting shore-parallel engineering structures or within 200 feet of eroding unconsolidated coastal banks.

EEA will provide a GIS-based tool to assist proponents in identifying highest hazard areas. However, Proponents should consult source data to determine whether a specific site falls within the highest hazard area. Notwithstanding the foregoing, EEA will produce and maintain a data layer displaying the high erosion areas as defined in this guidance and will publish the data layer through MassGIS. The MEPA Office will accept the output from this data layer as a definitive representation of the location of high erosion areas for the purposes of MEPA.

The map of the highest hazard areas was last updated August 2025 and will be updated from time to time on the basis of changes in available FEMA data and other sources over time. However, proponents should continue to consult source data and conduct resource area delineations for authoritative determinations of whether a specific site is within the highest hazard area.