



FLORENCE COUNTY

PLANNING, BUILDING INSPECTION, ENGINEERING
AND CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

DEBI MATTHEWS, SENIOR PLANNER

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COUNTY ENGINEER

December 18, 2015

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Honorable Governor Hailey,

We are receiving a consistent message from business owners, homeowners, builders, developers, architects, engineers, executive staff and elected officials that enforcement of State and Federal Building laws are too burdensome for those impacted by the recent floods and that the legal requirements stifle all charity efforts to help those that were inundated by the recent flood. Specifically, we are told that the Governor's Office has declared that it is not necessary to enforce these regulations while the communities recover. We have also been told that other Counties are not enforcing regulations relative to the flood plain and FEMA requirements to re-build and repair properties.

We have contacted other Counties that have been named, such as Lexington County, to confirm whether they are not enforcing regulations normally required for construction and have found that these Counties are indeed enforcing all regulations required by the law. We have not, however, received anything from the State to confirm whether the statements regarding the Governor's Office Declaration are true or not. Therefore, I am writing to confirm if we are supposed to 'ease up' and not enforce regulations and if so, which ones should we not enforce? We want to be as helpful as possible but understand that the law compels us to enforce the laws written by the State and Federal Governments. Failure to do so could jeopardize the taxpayers of Florence County with regard to future claims for damages due to the lack of enforcement. Could you please provide us with any special direction, in times of emergency, which has allegedly been provided elsewhere in the State?

If what we are being told is not true, I have some ideas that I could share that may make things more simple during times of emergency that would not cancel the legal requirements set in place for day-to-day business requirements for the construction industry but would enhance the charitable efforts of those from within and from without the State. Just let me know if you are interested in discussing these options.

Thank you in advance for your prompt response to my request.

Best regards,

Jonathan B. Graham, AIA
FLORENCE COUNTY PLANNING DIRECTOR