



SITKA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

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February 16, 2016

Sally Russell Cox, State of Alaska Risk MAP Coordinator
Division of Community and Regional Affairs
Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1640
Anchorage, AK 99501-3569

Dear Ms. Cox:

The Sitka Economic Development Association (SEDA), representing the community of Sitka, Alaska, requests a more detailed /integrated hazard assessment for Sitka for the following hazards: landslides, river flooding, avalanches, coastal flooding, tsunami, and volcanic eruption.

The landslide risk assessment is especially urgent, as three Sitka residents were killed in one of more than 45 landslides that occurred on the August 18, 2015. These slides also caused significant damage to community infrastructure and private property.

We understand that FEMA's Risk Map program is working on a coastal flooding hazard assessment for Sitka, and look forward to seeing the new map. A tsunami inundation study was published for Sitka. However, that study does not assess the potential inundations resulting from subaerial or submarine landslide which should have been included.

In addition, Sitka is just fifteen miles from Mount Edgecumbe, which had major eruptions 12,000 years ago, last erupted 5,000 years ago, and has no ground-based monitoring.

In conjunction with a new, more detailed hazard assessment for landslides, river flooding, avalanches, and volcanic eruption, it would be good to assess the relative risk of each hazard for specific areas of the existing community and its planned northward expansion toward Katlian Bay. Specifically, we understand that living at tide level is risky for storm surge and tsunami, and our hillsides are landslide risks.

Information from a detailed hazard assessment would be used in community planning and improving hazard response.

The SEDA Board of Directors met on February 16, 2016 to discuss this issue and unanimously passed a motion to send this letter making a formal request for action. SEDA Board members represent a broad spectrum of business sectors in Sitka and through a contract with the City and Borough of Sitka, SEDA manages the Gary Paxton Industrial Park. One of the August 18th landslides caused significant damage to Industrial Park property. Therefore, SEDA has a direct interest in having a more detailed/integrated hazard assessment done for Sitka.

For more information concerning the role of SEDA in the community please see SEDA most recent Strategic Plan for 2016.

Thank you,

Trevor Harang, President

cc: Mark Gorman, Municipal Administrator, City & Borough of Sitka