

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Flood Ready Vermont

The Flood Safety Act and making room for rivers

October 8, 2026



ACT 121 WAS A DIRECT RESPONSE TO THE 2023 FLOODS

Public safety is the focus: reduce risk to life and property

Flood risk is rising. Storms are more intense, flood timing is shifting, and flood hazard areas are growing.

Don't make it worse

New development can't raise flood risk for what's already there.

Protect new housing

The State is investing heavily in housing. It has to hold up to today's floods and tomorrow's.

Address existing risk

Work with Vermont Emergency Management to mitigate vulnerable buildings first.

Four ways Act 121 works to reduce flood impacts

01

State regulation of new development in river corridors

02

A statewide minimum standard for building in floodplains

03

Stronger dam safety through increased oversight

04

Increasing compensation for unavoidable impacts to wetlands

Two simple rules for building near rivers



Where it's built up

Build no closer to the river than what's already there (the infill standard)



Where it's still open

Preserve the space the river still has; **avoid future river conflicts, property damage and expensive channel management**



TWO KINDS OF FLOOD RISK

To see the full risk, we need both maps



FEMA inundation hazard area

Where floodwater rises and spreads



ANR river corridor

Room the river needs to erode and adjust over time. Mapped statewide.

Either one can be the bigger hazard, depending on the place.

NO ADVERSE IMPACT · FLOODPLAINS

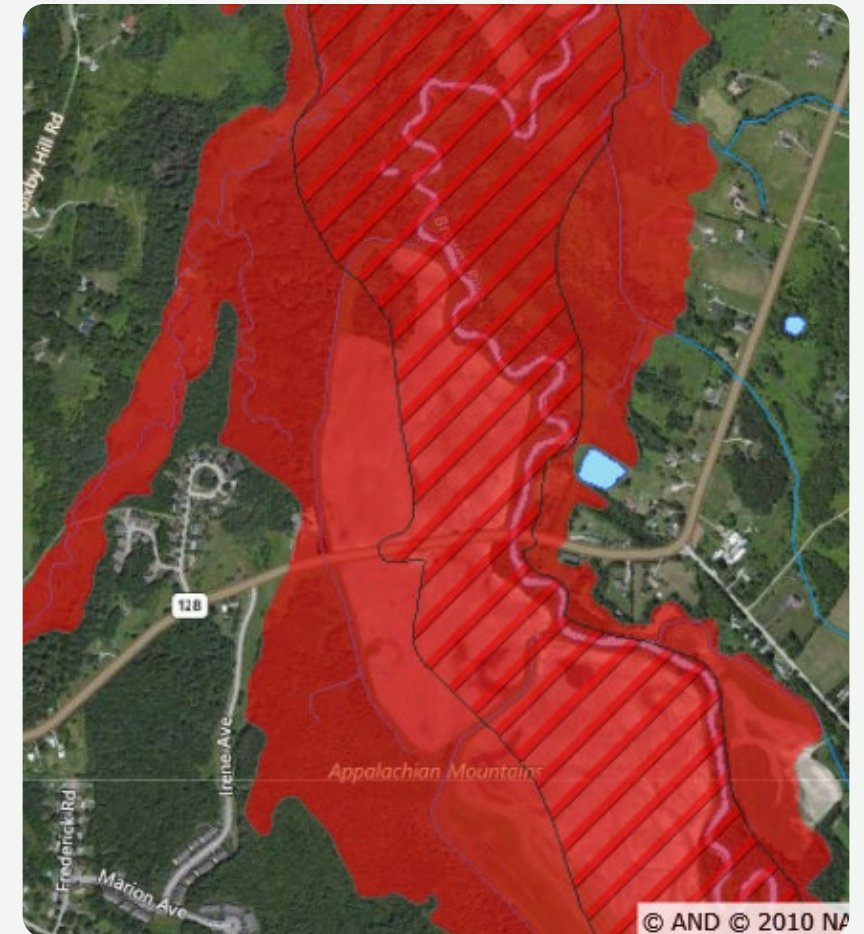
Build so your project doesn't flood your neighbor

In FEMA floodways

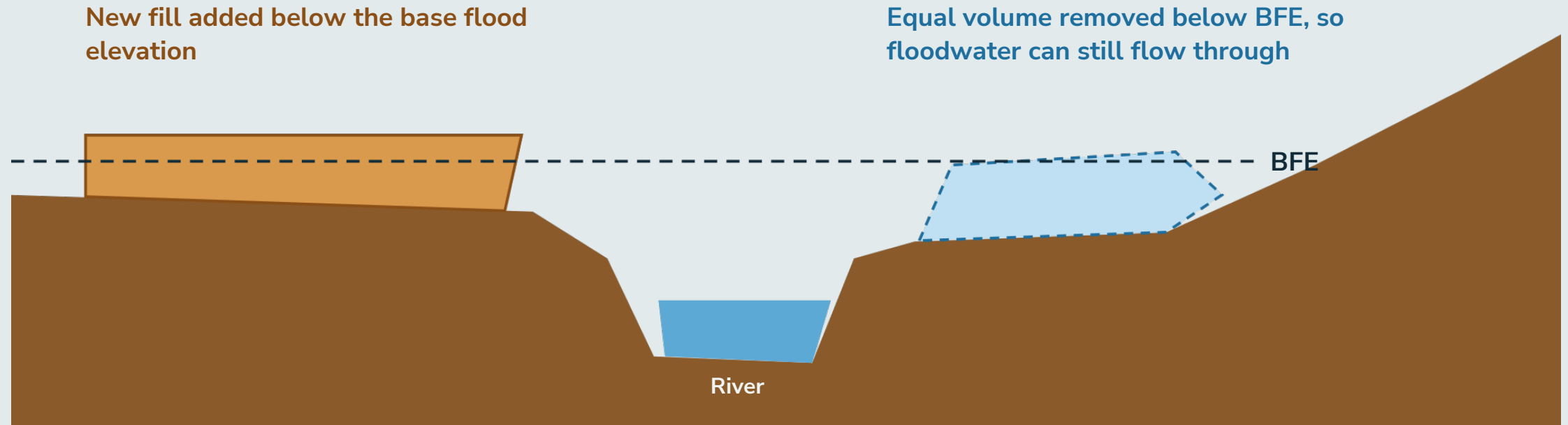
No increase in base flood elevation or velocity

Across the whole flood hazard area

- No loss of flood storage volume
- Buildings elevated **2 feet above** base flood elevation
- Critical facilities above the 0.2% annual chance (500-year) flood



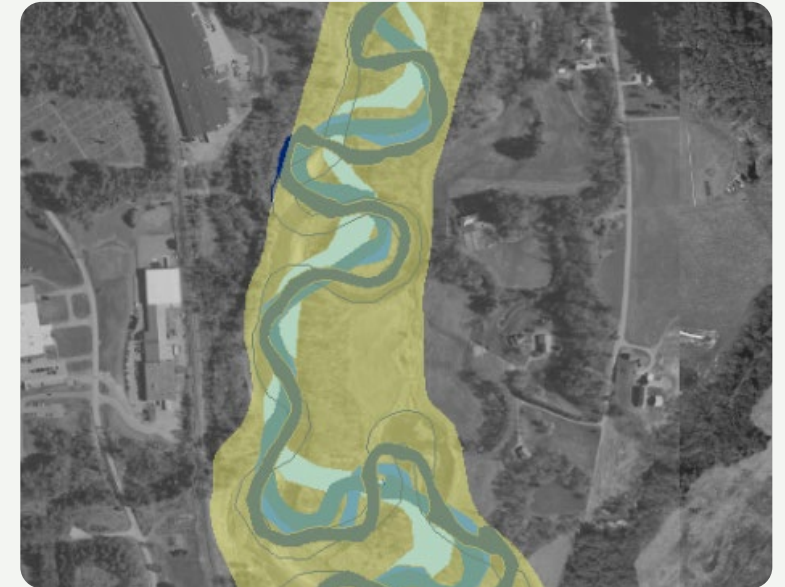
Fill in the floodplain? Make equal room elsewhere.



Minimize new investment in the river's meander belt



What happens without room: the river moves, and buildings in its path go with it.



The corridor marks the belt the river **may occupy**
– these are places to avoid new structures

Anticipated Concerns

- Standards that meet (or exceed) statewide minimums for floodplain (inundation) regulation will need to be adopted by all communities
 - Many communities will need to update standards that may have been in place for decades
 - Lift anticipated to be largest for small, less-resourced municipalities
- The River Corridor Permitting Program is anticipated to apply to:
 - 5,600 miles of riparian areas along the larger rivers and streams around the state
 - 209,000 acres of land that includes part, or all, of an estimated 45,000 parcels
- More time is needed to engage municipal officials and Vermonters, incorporate feedback and build an approach that gains widespread support

Current Estimated Timelines

Milestone	Statute Timeline (2024)	Current Estimated Timelines
Flood hazard areas	X	X
State minimum standard for NFIP towns	Adopted and effective 1/1/2026	Outreach & feedback Fall/Winter 2026-2027. Rulemaking 2027
Study committee: State role in NFIP	Report 8/15/2025	Currently in Progress. Report likely spring 2027
River corridors	X	X
Amend map to identify infill areas	1/1/2026	Infill Area Mapping In Progress
Education, outreach and feedback	Ends 1/1/2027; report 1/15/2027	Ends 1/1/2028; report 1/15/2028
Rule updated	7/1/2027	7/2028
New statewide permit	1/1/2028	7/2029

FLOOD READY VERMONT

Build in safer places. Give rivers room. Don't make it worse.

Find river corridors and flood hazard areas on the ANR Natural Resources Atlas:
anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/anra5

Questions?

