



For Immediate Release

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Press Release:

Newtok Awarded Grant to Acquire and Demolish Homes Threatened by Erosion

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to Provide 1.7 Million in Funds

JBER, ALASKA – The Newtok Village Council has been awarded 1.7 million dollars in Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds to acquire and demolish Newtok village homes threatened by erosion from the Ninglick River.

The HMGP funds will be used to acquire and demolish seven homes in Newtok. The State Hazard Mitigation Advisory Committee has identified Newtok as a community with significant erosion.

“HMGP is not designed to move entire communities, which is the ultimate goal of Newtok. With this HMGP award we can address the homes most in danger of being lost to river erosion,” said Mike Sutton, Director of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM). “As the Ninglick River continues to cause erosion issues in Newtok, DHS&EM will continue to work with Newtok Village Council and our partners to explore viable solutions to the problems these Alaskans face.”

Homes identified in the Newtok Village Council’s HMGP application will not be forced to participate in the HMGP acquisition and demolition project. Participating homeowners will be given fair market value for their homes, after which they will be given time to vacate the property. All structures on the acquired property will be demolished and the land will be designated as an open space in perpetuity.

“Naturally occurring erosion, like Newtok is experiencing, is not eligible for aid through the normal state or federal disaster declaration process. Without HMGP it is likely the residents would see their homes taken by the river without any financial help,” said Sutton.

The state and the Newtok Village Council will schedule a kick-off meeting as soon as possible.

HMGP provides grants to states, local, and tribal governments, as well as some select non-profit organizations, to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a Major Disaster Declaration. FEMA and states share costs on a 75% to 25% basis.

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