



October 19, 2017

Via E-mail and U.S. Mail

Honorable Aaron Peskin
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Supervisor Peskin:

Thank you for your letter, dated October 16, 2017, requesting:

- The detailed rationale used to determine that the Slope Protection Act be amended to delete the Blume Map as a criterion for evaluation; and
- Which proposed San Francisco development projects would be affected by this alteration to the Slope Protection Act?

The Department of Building Inspection (DBI) adheres to and implements the Slope Protection Act to ensure the ongoing health and safety of our residents. These additional geotechnical reviews help ensure the safety and integrity of all projects approved in slope protection areas.

With respect to the proposed elimination of the 1974 Blume Map as a criterion for evaluation of proposed projects, DBI carefully considered this proposed change after hearing from several respected geotechnical engineers – all of whom agreed that the now 43-year old Blume Map is out of date and obsolete. Their detailed rationale included:

- The Blume Map includes out of date information, such as several 'likely' landslide areas that are, in fact, flat, with zero slope grades;
- The Blume Map is vague and difficult to read with its hand-drawn perimeters; and
- The Blume Map is not digitized and a digitized map is available (the State's Seismic Hazard Zones Map published in November 2000 and adopted by the City in 2001, which includes addresses, block and lot specifics and is recognized by geotechnical engineers as more accurate than Blume. The State Seismic Hazard Zones Map is also part of DBI's Permit Tracking System and utilized by the Planning Department.)

For all of the above reasons, the professional consensus is that DBI needs to update its plan reviews of Slope Protection area proposed projects to rely upon the November 17, 2000 Official State Seismic Hazard Zones Map.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
1660 Mission Street – San Francisco CA 94103
Office (415) 558-6131 – FAX (415) 558-6225
Email: Tom.Hui@sfgov.org

The Building Inspection Commission, DBI's Structural subcommittee, and its Code Advisory Committee, heard testimony from geotechnical experts, and approved the proposed change to eliminate Blume and utilize instead the State's Seismic Hazard Zones Map – a recommendation the Building Inspection Commission approved in August 2015 after a thorough and transparent public process. DBI staff withheld transmission of this recommendation to the Board of Supervisors until the new State and local building codes took effect in January 2017. The Commission then voted unanimously on August 16, 2017 to eliminate the use of the Blume Map in Slope Protection project areas – and File No. 170972 is now pending on the Land Use and Transportation Committee's 30-day calendar, which proposes to codify this action.

As to which proposed projects would be affected by this alteration to the Slope Protection Act, it would be applied to project permit applications submitted after the proposed amendment is passed by the Board, signed by the Mayor, and takes legal effect.

In the meantime until this change is passed by ordinance, all proposals will utilize both the Blume Map and the State Hazard Zones Map. In addition, DBI's Plan Review staff will check projects approved since January 1, 2017 to determine whether or not the Blume Map was utilized, as required by the Slope Protection Act, in the plan review of all projects that were in the Slope Protection Act areas. This review is ongoing.

Thank you, as always, for your support of the Department of Building Inspection.

Sincerely,



Tom C.Hui, S.E., C.B.O.
Director

cc: Supervisor Mark Farrell
Supervisor Katy Tang
Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors