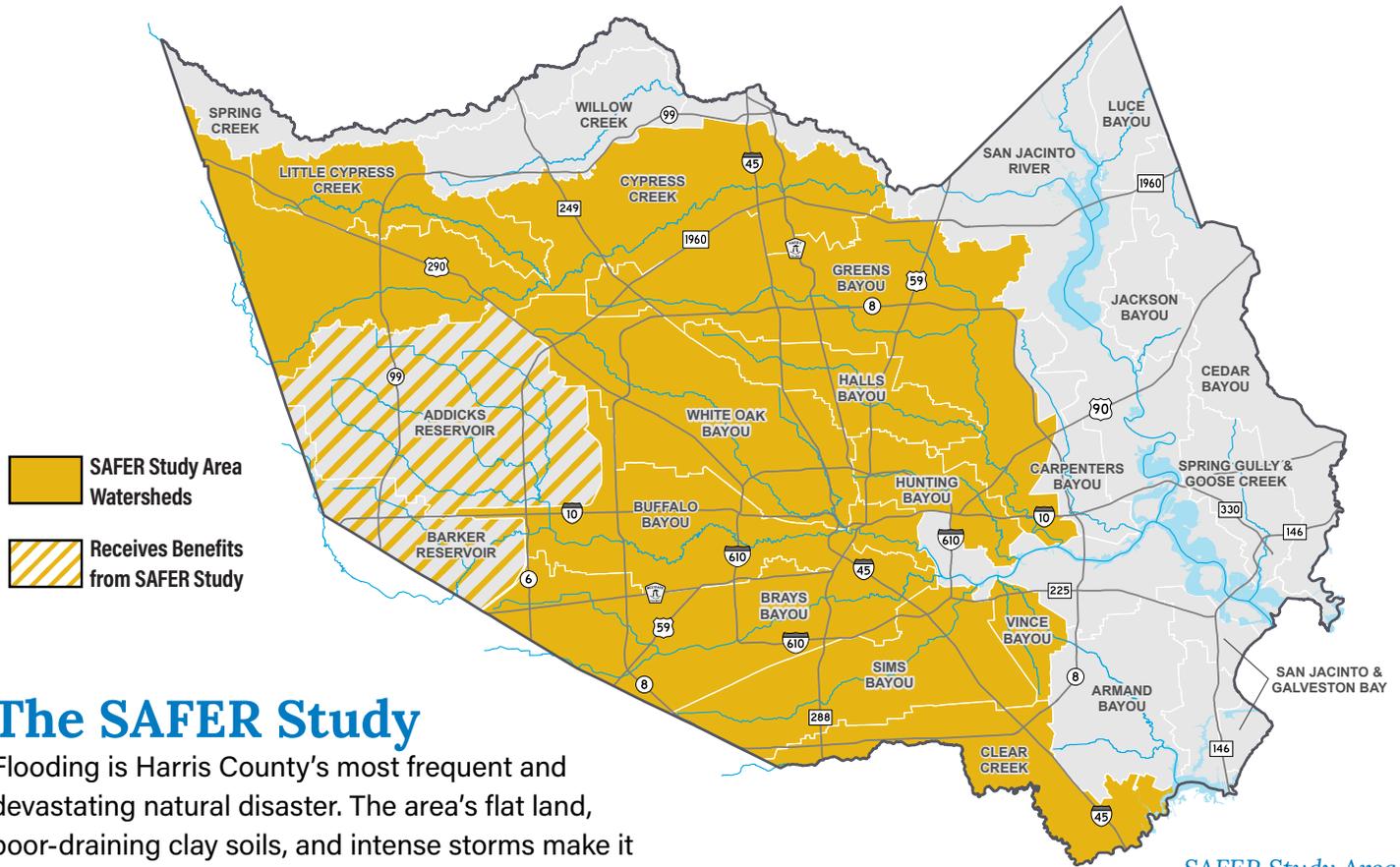


STUDY GUIDE



SAFER Study Area

The SAFER Study

Flooding is Harris County's most frequent and devastating natural disaster. The area's flat land, poor-draining clay soils, and intense storms make it especially flood-prone. Major storms like Harvey and Tropical Storm Allison have made one thing clear: no part of the county is immune to flooding. To protect our communities, we need big solutions to reduce future flood risk.

That's why the Harris County Flood Control District is leading the **SAFER Study**: an effort to identify transformational flood risk reduction projects across the county. SAFER stands for: **S**olutions for **A**dvancing Floodplain **E**valuation and **R**esilience. This locally led initiative focuses on large-scale flood risk reduction projects that are grounded in data, guided by community input, and aimed at building a safer, more resilient future for Harris County.

The SAFER Study will focus on 11 of Harris County's watersheds that experience interconnected flooding challenges. By looking at these areas together, we can explore coordinated, system-wide strategies. This study is a multi-year initiative that builds on decades of progress and combines engineering, environmental expertise, and community input to identify projects that will improve quality of life. Most importantly, this work won't be done in a vacuum. Your input will help shape which projects move forward. We're developing SAFER hand-in-hand with residents, property owners, and stakeholders to ensure final recommendations reflect what matters most. We look forward to working with you and incorporating your input in the SAFER Study!



To accommodate our diverse community, meeting materials and interpretation services are available in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Mandarin. To access this information in these languages, use the QR code to the left or visit [theSAFERstudy.org](https://thesaferstudy.org) to learn more.



Example of a stormwater detention basin on Brays Bayou watershed

What is the Harris County Flood Control District?

In 1937 — after back-to-back devastating floods hit the Houston area — the Texas Legislature created the Harris County Flood Control District to help reduce flood risks throughout the county. Today, we are governed by the Harris County Commissioners Court, and we work closely with other local and federal agencies. One of the key reasons we were originally created was to serve as a local partner to help bring in federal funding for flood damage reduction projects. And over the past almost 90 years, our scope has expanded. Not only do we plan and implement new projects that expand and improve our drainage network, but we also have maintenance teams working to keep our bayous and channels ready to function as designed when the next storm hits. In fact, it's built into our mission: to "plan, implement and maintain flood risk reduction projects guided by community and natural values." We've invested billions of dollars in flood damage reduction projects throughout Harris County — projects that have been funded through federal, state and local resources.

The Flood Control District does "not" have sole jurisdiction over flood-related matters in Harris County. In fact, there are many other entities

involved that have special interests in their particular areas of responsibility. The City of Houston, for example, is one of the local floodplain administrators for the community's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The city has its own criteria for design of its drainage systems - primarily the design of storm sewers and street drainage, but also stormwater detention for these systems. Other incorporated areas are also floodplain administrators and have their own drainage design criteria for their road systems. In unincorporated areas of Harris County, the Office of the County Engineer is the floodplain administrator. In all, there are 34 floodplain administrators in the county. The Flood Control District is not one of them. To complete the jurisdiction picture, there are four county commissioners' precincts. In all, with 34 floodplain administrators reporting to separate entities of government, there are nearly 250 elected officials involved in the administration of drainage and flooding issues in the county, including each municipality's building permit program.

For more information about the Flood Control District's many programs, projects, and partners, visit HCPCD.org.

The SAFER Study is important because it gives Harris County a chance to plan long-term projects to reduce flooding. It looks at 11 connected watersheds as a single system, helping to find stronger, more effective strategies.

By working in coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other potential partners, the study opens the door to significant funding from the federal and state government. The SAFER Study also aims to deliver multiple benefits—such as reduced flood risk across Harris County and increased quality of life for residents. Public input is a critical part of the process to ensure strategies reflect community needs and priorities.

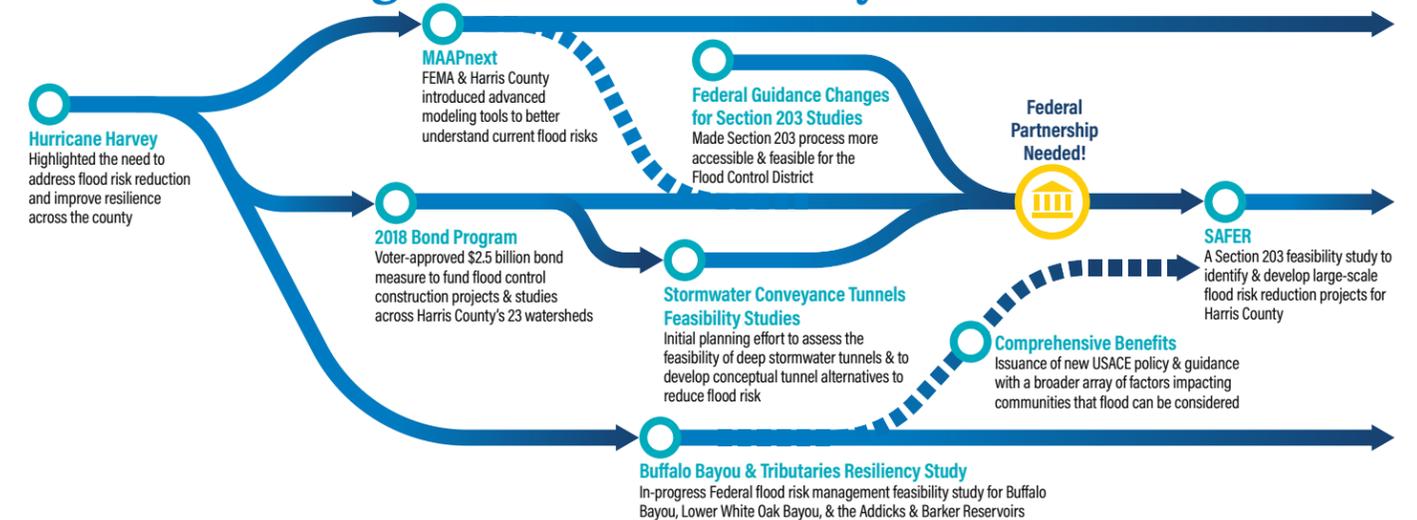
The SAFER Study is following rigorous federal requirements, overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, while making sure community voices and environmental goals are at the heart of the process from the start. The study will follow a federal feasibility planning process, include a full environmental review through the National Environmental Policy Act, and gather public input at every stage.

The Flood Control District is also planning ahead not just for approval, but for action, ensuring the final recommendations can be built and funded. The ultimate goal is to deliver a strong, federally approved plan with broad public support and a clear path to action.

Finally, the SAFER Study is not a standalone effort – it compliments existing Flood Control District plans and projects to reduce the impacts of flooding across Harris County.

SAFER is not a standalone effort. It complements the Flood Control District's ongoing projects and expands our look at the future. With your involvement, expert input, and future partnerships, we're taking steady steps toward a more flood-resilient Harris County - together!

Efforts Leading to the SAFER Study



The SAFER Study is the result of years of local and federal efforts to better understand and reduce flood risk after Hurricane Harvey. It builds on major initiatives like Harris County's MAAPnext program, the 2018 Flood Control District Bond Program, and stormwater conveyance tunnel studies, while aligning with new federal policies that prioritize more community-focused strategies. These efforts laid the foundation for a coordinated, large-scale study like SAFER.

SAFER Study Goal and Objectives

The SAFER Study Team has preliminarily identified the following preliminary study goal and objectives to guide the federal feasibility planning process. We are seeking your input and insights to be sure that the SAFER Study accomplishes objectives that best serve our communities.

This preliminary goal and list of objectives will serve as the guiding principles of the SAFER Study to determine the effectiveness, acceptability, and success of each potential strategy identified during the planning process.

SAFER Study Goal:

Position Harris County, its communities, and its nationally significant resources to be more resilient to future flood events by delivering transformational, community-driven flood risk reduction solutions, in concert with other ongoing efforts.

SAFER Study Objectives:



Flood Risk Objectives

- Reduce riverine and urban flood risks and economic damages.
- Reduce risks to public safety and life loss during flood events.
- Address factors which contribute to channel erosion, land loss, and sedimentation in bayous and navigation channels.



Social Objectives

- Achieve flood risk management objectives while avoiding or minimizing detrimental impacts to communities within the study area.
- Through flood risk management actions, strengthen communities and address factors which impair quality of life.



Environmental Objectives

- Avoid or minimize adverse impacts to environmental and cultural resources.
- Preserve or enhance habitat, greenspace, and recreational opportunities, as part of an integrated flood risk reduction strategy.



Resilience Objectives

- Strengthen the social and economic resilience of individuals and communities, including the ability to better withstand and more efficiently recover from future flood events.
- Increase the resilience, robustness, redundancy, and adaptability of drainage infrastructure to manage reasonably foreseeable changes to flood events.



Multi-use / Partnership Objectives

- Leverage opportunities for beneficial use of excess earthen materials.
- Explore opportunities for public and private partnerships to augment flood risk management actions, including water supply, recreation, ecosystem restoration, and navigation considerations.

What types of flood risk reduction strategies will be investigated?

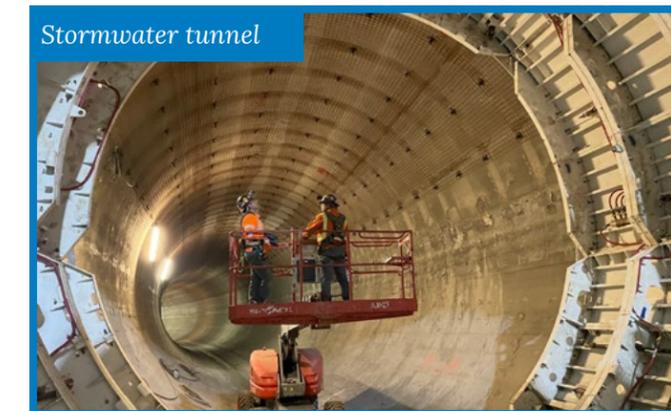
The SAFER Study will look at a wide range of strategies to reduce flooding across Harris County. Options will be carefully assessed to identify the most effective mix of strategies to enhance quality life for communities and improve long-term resilience.

Potential flood risk reduction strategies

- Expanded **stormwater detention basins** to help safely store stormwater away from communities.
- **Channel modifications** and improvements to improve capacity and enhance water conveyance.
- **Nature-based strategies**, such as wetlands restoration and floodplain expansion, to reduce the flow of and increase the absorption of floodwaters.
- Large-diameter **stormwater tunnels** fed by surface intakes to carry diverted floodwater underground.
- **Non-structural strategies**, such as home elevations and voluntary buyout programs.

The study results will determine the types of strategies that best meet the study's goal and objectives, which are reducing the risk of flooding for residents and increasing the long-term resilience across Harris County.

Options and concepts identified by the study process will be made available for public review and input at future SAFER Study public meetings.



What is the SAFER Study approach?

What makes SAFER different is the scale of the evaluation. It allows us to take a proactive look at larger projects, like tunnels or large detention systems, that go beyond routine improvements. We're also planning ahead—positioning Harris County for future partnerships and funding opportunities by aligning this study with a federal review process known as Section 203.

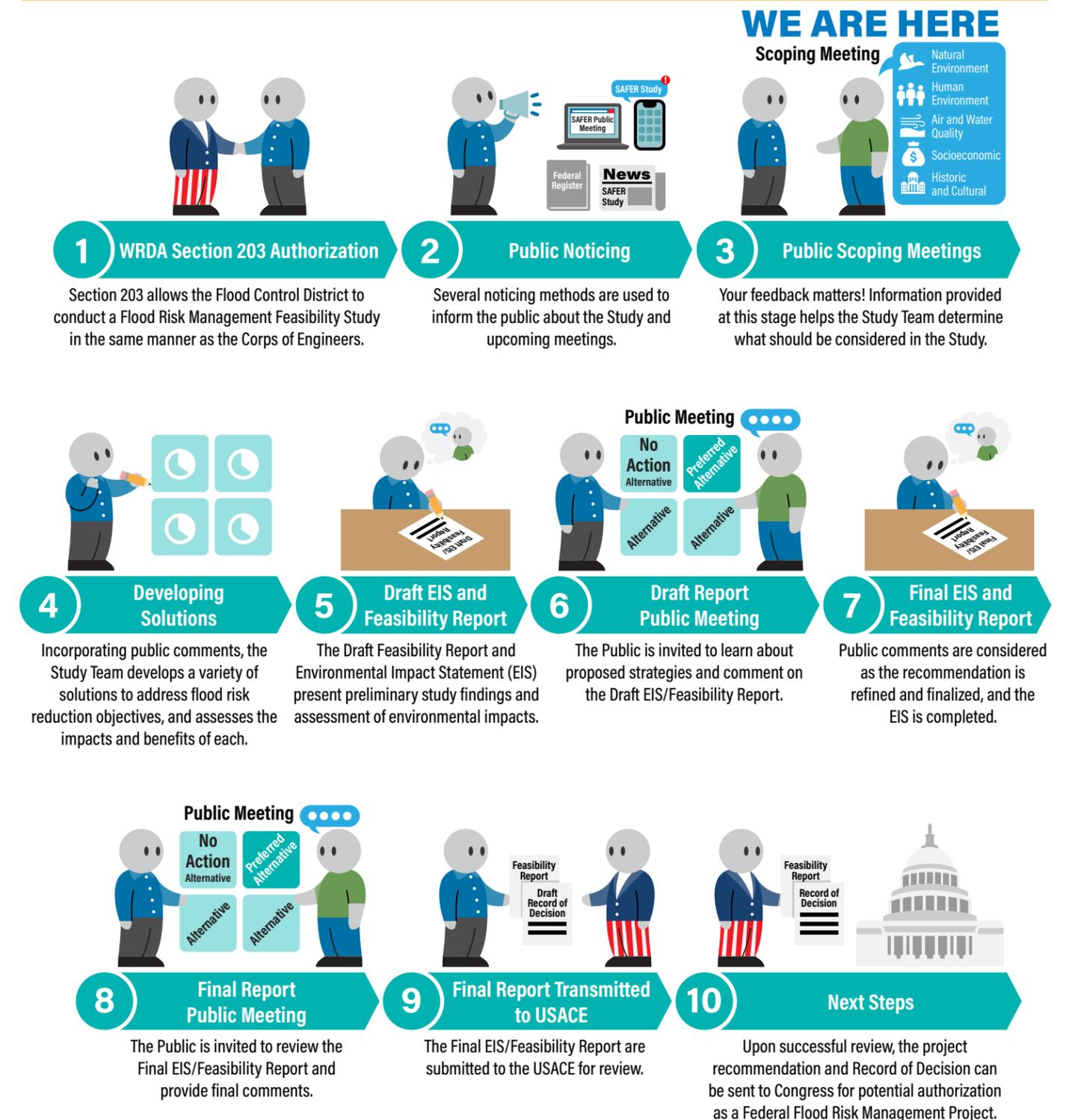
Section 203 lets local agencies, like the Harris County Flood Control District, lead studies that meet federal standards. These studies compare project options, evaluate benefits and impacts, and lay the groundwork for long-term support.

Let's take a closer look at how the SAFER Study moves through the Section 203 process step by step:

1. First, we receive approval to begin the study following the same process the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would use.
2. Next, we notify the public about the study and opportunities to get involved, through websites, news releases, emails, and social media posts.
3. At the start of the study, we host public meetings – known as public scoping meetings – to hear directly from you. This is an opportunity to share local challenges, priorities, and ideas.
4. Based on your input and technical research, we will develop a range of possible flood risk reduction strategies to evaluate.
5. We prepare a Draft Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement explaining the study's findings and evaluating each option's benefits, costs, and potential environmental effects.
6. We host a round of public meetings to share draft recommendations and gather feedback before moving forward.
7. After the public comments are reviewed and considered, we finalize the plan and complete required environmental documentation.
8. We host another round of public meetings to present the final report and give you a final chance to provide feedback.
9. The completed report is sent to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works with the U.S. Army Core of Engineers for review and approval.
10. If approved, the recommended projects can be submitted for Congressional authorization—opening the door to federal funding and partnership on construction in the future. We'll also look at other funding partners at the federal and state level to support.

Example of stormwater detention basin construction

The NEPA and Feasibility Study Process for Section 203 Projects



What is the SAFER Study Schedule?



The SAFER Study is already in motion and will continue through 2028. Here's what's ahead:

- In summer 2025, we're hosting public scoping meetings- your first opportunity to help shape the direction of the study.
- In 2026, we'll evaluate a wide range of potential flood risk reduction strategies, combining technical analysis with your input.
- Between 2026 and 2027, we'll release a Draft Feasibility Report. This preliminary document

outlines the potential of proposed projects. We'll also begin a formal environmental review to assess possible impacts.

- By 2027, the final report will be submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and reviewed by federal leadership.
- And in 2028, we'll ask Congress to authorize the plan, unlocking the potential for major federal funding and future construction.

How can I participate in the SAFER Study?

The success of the SAFER Study starts with **you**. Your voice helps us understand where the needs are and what matters most. We're hosting community meetings now to listen, learn, and collaborate.

You can get involved by attending public meetings, providing comments and input at meetings, or sharing your thoughts anytime at **theSAFERStudy.org**. Comments and feedback will be collected from residents throughout the study process. Your personal experiences, concerns, and ideas about flooding within Harris County are essential to developing effective strategies through the SAFER Study.

Comments will also provide the foundation for the problems and opportunities the SAFER Study seeks to address. Every comment, concern, and story shared will help define the study's priorities and shape its recommendations.

Your voice matters in this process

While public comments will be accepted throughout the SAFER Study, please submit comments by September 25, 2025, to ensure inclusion in this early phase of the study.

Written comments may be submitted by **September 25, 2025** to:

Mr. Danny Allen
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
2000 Fort Point Road
Galveston, TX 77550

Comments may also be submitted via email by September 25, 2025 to:
comments@theSAFERstudy.org

To complete an online comment form, visit the SAFER Study website at **theSAFERstudy.org** or scan the QR code below.

