



President Approves Over \$40 Million for Sacramento/San Joaquin Levees

Pombo, Feinstein request immediate action on levee repair studies

November 22, 2005

Washington, DC - This weekend, the President signed the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 2006, which was approved Congress earlier this month. The Act, which includes \$40.9 million to strengthen California levees and flood control systems, also allocates \$37 million for CALFED.

Also, in a joint letter sent today to Lt. General Carl Strock, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and House Resources Committee Chairman Richard W. Pombo (R-CA) urged the Corps to begin work on the 180-day Delta levee assessment immediately and issue progress reports monthly.

"This funding should put us six months away from having complete blueprints for the most critical levee repair projects," Chairman Pombo said. **"This is yet another step forward in the process of evaluating our vulnerabilities so we can get to work of preparing for - and doing everything we can to prevent - the unthinkable from happening in California. We have seen the tragic effects lagging infrastructure can have on our country, and we must guarantee that future generations never have to see them as we did. I am confident this funding will help us create a safer and more secure California."**

"If a major earthquake in Sacramento or the Bay Delta were to weaken the levees, it could cause terrible flooding, kill thousands of people, jeopardize the drinking water for 23 million people, and cost billions," Senator Feinstein said. **"That's why we've got to act now. The funding that has been approved is just a down payment on improving Sacramento-area flood control, but millions more are needed. We will not give up the fight. We will look for every way possible to obtain the funding that necessary to avert catastrophic flooding."**

For more information on Sacramento and Delta Levees, Flood Control and CALFED funding, please visit the websites of Senator Feinstein and Chairman Pombo.

The text of the letter sent to the Corps of Engineers follows:

Lt. General Carl Strock
Commander
United States Army Corps of Engineers
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20314

Dear General Strock:

As you know, the system of levees in the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta provides flood protection for hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses and millions of acres of agricultural land. The levees also protect the water source for over 20 million Californians. A catastrophic levee failure caused by earthquakes, heavy rains or general disrepair and neglect would be devastating to the lives and livelihoods of millions, and cause untold economic and environmental damages.

The House Resources Committee recently held a hearing on protecting the Central Valley and the Delta from natural catastrophes. At the hearing, the Committee heard from a variety of experts who testified on the critical state of the Delta flood control infrastructure, and the possibility for a disaster that could dwarf the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina. There is broad consensus that repairing and strengthening the levees should be a top priority and that such fixes would be far less costly than the impacts of Katrina-like disaster.

As a result of our work with the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, the Fiscal Year 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations Act included \$500,000 for the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to conduct the 180-day Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta Levee study authorized by the Water Supply, Reliability and Environmental Improvement Act (H.R. 2828). This funding serves as an important first step towards reconstructing and improving Delta levees. When the study is completed, we intend to begin appropriating the \$90 million authorized in our CALFED bill to make actual improvements on the levees.

Since the President signed the levee study funding into law this weekend, it is imperative that the Corps move forward immediately on this matter. Californians have asked for and deserve nothing less than swift action from the federal government on Delta protection. This study and your agency's future action on this matter will help provide this long-awaited action. As such, we would appreciate monthly updates on the progress your agency is making on this study and in your efforts to protect Californians from devastating floods in the Delta.

Thank you for attention to this matter. We look forward to our continued work on these very important issues.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Richard W. Pombo
Member of Congress

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