



GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

September 14, 2005

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Pombo  
U. S. House of Representatives  
2411 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Feinstein and Representative Pombo:

We appreciate your interest and support for timely and necessary improvements to California's extensive levee system. I am confident that we all agree that the flood catastrophe triggered by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and other portions of the Gulf Coast brings a sobering reminder of the staggering human and property toll that a major flood can bring. In California, the two most critical levee issues are associated with the federal project levees on the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and their tributaries, together with the local levees in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The Sacramento metropolitan area has the lowest level of flood protection for any large urban area in the nation. Other river cities such as Tacoma, Dallas, St. Louis, and Kansas City have 500-year flood protection. Even New Orleans had a 250-year level of flood protection. Sacramento only has about a 100-year level of protection, a woefully inadequate level for a major city and the capital of California.

In addition, there are over 700 miles of structurally questionable local levees protecting low lying areas in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. While primarily protecting agricultural areas and less populated rural communities, these levees also provide for the conveyance of drinking water to over two-thirds of all Californians (almost eight percent of the US population) and irrigate some of the most strategic and productive farmland in the nation. Future disaster scenarios predict multiple levee failures in the Delta. Such an event would degrade water quality, allow salt water to quickly intrude into the Delta and lead to an extended interruption of state and federal water deliveries to the Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley, and Southern California. This would have a huge negative economic impact on both California and the nation.

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The state Department of Water Resources (DWR) staff, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) district staff, and the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) collectively have identified and prioritized the most critical levee programs for California that need federal funding to help avoid a flood event like Hurricane Katrina. These programs were prioritized by giving high priority to those programs that were closest to construction and those that addressed critical issues relating to public safety or California's economy. Some of these projects may already have partial federal funding scheduled in this year's budget, but are included here:

<u>Priority Project</u>	<u>Proposed Federal Funding</u>
1. South Sacramento Streams Project	\$ 10,000,000
2. Sacramento River Bank Protection Project	\$ 20,000,000
3. American River Common Features Project	\$ 16,000,000
4. Folsom Dam Modifications and Raise	\$ 24,555,000
5. HR2828 Delta Project Priority Study – 180-day study	\$ 500,000
6. Delta Risk Management Strategy (with DWR)	\$ 3,000,000
7. Levee Systems Evaluations (multi-year program)	\$ 8,000,000 (first year)
8. Natomas Reimbursement to SAFCA	\$ 4,500,000
9. Mid-Valley Area Levee Reconstruction Project	\$ 3,300,000
10. Yuba River Basin Project	\$ 1,200,000
11. Lower Cache Creek, Woodland	\$ 600,000
12. Middle Creek Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Rest.	\$ 1,000,000

The above projects are cost-shared with the state and local partners. We expect that both the state and its local partners will be able to provide their share of the funding for these projects.

There are also many other important Corps projects that require federal funding. Correcting deficiencies in California's levee system will demand a comprehensive and sustained effort. More specific authority for the Corps may be prudent and necessary. Flood protection needs in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta involve three immediate actions:

- A) The Sacramento River Bank Protection Project would construct improvements to the levees protecting urban areas along the Sacramento River in FY 06.
- B) The Delta Project Priority 180-day Study will provide Congress with a recommended plan to address critical levee stability reconstruction projects and priorities as directed by Congress in PL 108-361.

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C) The Delta Islands and Levees Feasibility study will develop the Delta Risk Management Strategy (DRMS) as also directed by PL 108-361. The DRMS is an expedited study that will address levee stability throughout the Delta and recommend risk reduction measures that would be part of a long-term solution.

Reinvigorating the federal government's commitment to emergency response planning for levee failures in the Delta and engaging in robust emergency response planning and pre-positioning of resources are also crucial. The Corps had only a limited response to the Jones Tract Levee failure in 2004, intended to prevent flooding of adjacent islands after Jones Tract had failed. The Corps did not participate in closing the breach or the pumping of flood waters from Jones Tract. The Corps commitment to assist closing breaches or reclaim islands in the Delta during a flood disaster is unclear. Congress needs to provide the Corps clear authority and funding that commits the Corps to swiftly respond to levee failures and in reclamation of islands in the aftermath of a flood disaster in the Delta. The Corps should fully participate with the state to create an emergency response plan that:

- Includes early warning of storm events
- Rapid reconnaissance of distress
- Pre-positioning of flood fight and rock materials
- Planning for contracting for barges and barge-mounted equipment
- Planning for flood-fight resources
- A robust hydrodynamic model that helps analyze the effects of levee failures on water quality which would help prioritize repairs of multiple levee failures

California is poised to assist Congress with further briefings on the status of our flood preparedness challenges at your convenience. Thank you again for working on these critical levee issues for California.

Sincerely,



Arnold Schwarzenegger

cc: The California Congressional Delegation