



Senator Feinstein, Representative Pombo Praise
President's Disaster Declaration for Delta Levee Break
July 1, 2004

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and U.S. Representative Richard Pombo (R-Tracy) today announced that President Bush has declared the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Levee Break a major disaster for the State of California.

Senator Feinstein and Representative Pombo wrote President Bush to support Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's request for the declaration. This declaration triggers the release of Federal funds to aid communities in their recovery as a result of the levee break that occurred on June 3, 2004.

"This declaration helps put San Joaquin County on the road to recovery," Senator Feinstein said. "The Federal funds will go a long way to help the community rebuild and clean up the damage."

"This is great news," said Rep. Pombo. "The federal government has stepped-up and is doing its part to repair the damage. We need to ensure Californians have a clean and safe water supply."

Citing the \$93 million in economic damage and the increased risk of water supply contamination stemming from the levee break, Senator Feinstein and Representative Pombo urged President Bush to concur with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's State declaration of a Major Disaster for the County of San Joaquin.

Following is the text of the letter Senator Feinstein and Representative Pombo sent to President Bush seeking his assistance:

June 23, 2004

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger issued a Declaration of Major Disaster for the County of San Joaquin on June 17, 2004. This declaration was issued as a result of a levee break in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, which allowed the inundation of 12,000 acres of prime farmland and threatened the domestic water supply millions of residents. We write to you to urge the President of the United States, at the earliest time, to concur in the Governor's designation by issuing a federal declaration of Major Disaster.

The County of San Joaquin, working closely with federal and State damage assessment experts, has identified damages totaling \$93 million, of which \$49 million is public and \$44 million is private. Since more than 75% of the surface water flowing through the State of California passes through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, unless the levee breach is repaired, the drinking water supply for the vast majority of households in Central and Southern California remains at risk of contamination due to the potential salt water intrusion. There is also great concern about other nearby levees. Should the wave action and erosion, greatly exacerbated by the existing break, cause adjacent levees to fail, then several communities and thousands of acres of both developed and agricultural land are in jeopardy of inundation.

San Joaquin County and the State of California need the full force and effect of the resources of the federal government to address this major disaster and put in place mechanisms to avoid its recurrence. It is for these reasons that we ask your immediate assistance in obtaining a Presidential Declaration of a Major Disaster for San Joaquin County.

Sincerely,

DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senate

RICHARD W. POMBO
United States House of Representatives

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