



Senator Feinstein, Representative Pombo Urge President to
Declare a Major Disaster for Delta Levee Break
June 24, 2004

Washington, DC – Citing the \$93 million in damage and the increased risk of water supply contamination stemming from the June 3 levee break in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Representative Richard Pombo (R-Tracy) urged President Bush today to issue a federal declaration of Major Disaster for the County of San Joaquin.

In a joint letter to President Bush, Senator Feinstein and Representative Pombo sought the President's concurrence with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's recent State declaration of a Major Disaster.

“Action by the Federal government to assist San Joaquin County and the State of California is urgently needed,” Senator Feinstein said. **“It is our hope that President Bush concurs with the Governor’s designation and issues a federal declaration of Major Disaster.”**

“It’s time for action,” said Rep. Pombo. “We’ve seen the assessment, we know the consequences, and it’s time to get moving on funding. That’s why Senator Feinstein and I have written this letter. It’s the next step in obtaining the funds needed to clean up the disaster area.”

The text of the letter is follows:

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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