



Feinstein, Boxer, 4 Northern California Representatives Call on
Delegation to Unite Behind Plan to Protect State from Flooding
September 22, 2005

-- Spending Plan Laid Out to Reinforce Levees in Sacramento and the Delta --

Washington, DC – A bipartisan group of California’s Congressional Delegation, led by U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), today urged the other members of the California delegation to unite behind a \$92.65 million plan to protect California from flooding.

Senator Feinstein, joined by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Representatives Doris Matsui (D-Calif.), Wally Herger (R-Calif.), Mike Thompson (D-Calif.), and Dan Lungren (R-Calif.) identified two key areas at risk of catastrophic flooding – Sacramento and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta – and laid out a specific spending plan to secure FY 2006 funding for this critical effort to improve flood protection.

Following is the text of a letter that was sent to California Congressional Delegation Members along with copies of letters from Governor Schwarzenegger and Colonel Ron Light, the Sacramento District Commander of the Army Corps of Engineers. Copies of all three letters are available upon request:

“We write to request your assistance in securing funding on a priority basis to increase flood protection in our State.

We believe that the probabilities of a levee breach due to a major storm, earthquake, or deterioration remain high. Hurricane Katrina has taught us that we must prepare for such an event. In consultation with the Army Corps of Engineers and Governor Schwarzenegger, we propose a Fiscal Year 2006 program that will provide the Sacramento area with 100 year flood protection and prepare for construction work on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta levee system, which have been identified by the Governor as the highest priority needs in the State.

A major breach in these levees could imperil hundreds of thousands of people and endanger most of the State’s water supply. We believe that the best course of action is to proceed expeditiously on the projects that will provide the most protection to population centers and infrastructure. It is our hope that the delegation will unite in a bipartisan fashion to move these proposals forward in this year’s Appropriations cycle.

In recent weeks, we have seen all too clearly the impact of inadequate flood protection in urbanized areas. The City of Sacramento has the highest risk of flooding of any major city in the country and has suffered serious floods twice in the last ten years. The proposal below will, in the next year, reinforce Sacramento’s levee system to give it 100-year flood protection and

advance work on Folsom Dam that will provide 200-year protection. It also addresses the risk to areas around Sacramento—like Yuba-Sutter—that have suffered major floods.

A second major vulnerability identified by the Governor is the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta levee system. This network of levees protects some of the most productive agricultural land in our Nation. The impact of neglecting them was demonstrated last year with the Jones' Tract flood. A major levee failure in the Delta could be brought on by an earthquake, heavy winter rains like those in Southern California this year, or by time and deterioration. Should that occur, brackish water would flood into the Delta, inundating homes and farm land and threatening the water supply for the Central Valley and Southern California.

Over 3 million acres of farmland and over 20 million people depend on water supplies from the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project. In the event of a major Delta levee breach, these distribution systems could be inoperable for months, or even years. Clearly, disruption of water to our State's biggest industry and our population centers would be a staggering blow to our State and the Nation. Fortunately it is preventable. The Army Corps of Engineers has a program of short and long term risk assessments of Delta flood protection. With adequate funding, construction can begin on the most immediate problems in FY07, while a long term strategy is developed.

Below is the FY 06 program that we propose in consultation with Governor Schwarzenegger and the Army Corps of Engineers.

1. \$ 10.0 million - South Sacramento Streams
2. \$ 20.0 million - Sacramento River Bank Protection
3. \$ 16.0 million - American River Common Features
4. \$ 15.0 million - American River Folsom Dam Raise
5. \$ 9.55 million - American River Folsom Dam Modifications
6. \$ 0.5 million - CalFed 180-day levee report directed in PL 108-361
7. \$ 3.0 million - Delta Islands and Levees Feasibility Study to conduct the
Delta Risk Management Strategy directed in PL 108-361
8. \$ 8.0 million - Levees System Evaluation and FEMA certification process
9. \$ 4.5 million - Natomas Reimbursement to SAFCA
10. \$ 3.3 million - Mid-Valley Levee Reconstruction
11. \$ 1.2 million - Yuba River
12. \$ 0.6 million - Lower Cache Creek
13. \$ 1.0 million - Middle Creek

These projects will be cost shared by state and local agencies. Together our delegation can ensure that full federal participation proceeds with the urgency needed to prevent a major disaster in our great State. Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss this proposal.”

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