

Matsui Asks President for Emergency Flood Control Funding Joins Senator Feinstein and bipartisan group

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Joins Senator Feinstein and bipartisan group of CA Representatives in sending letter

October 21, 2005

Friday, October 21, 2005

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Washington, DC — U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) joined with Representatives Richard Pombo (R-Calif.), Doris Matsui (D-Calif.), Daniel Lungren (R-Calif.), and Mike Thompson (D-Calif.) today to urge that President Bush include nearly \$50 million to help protect Sacramento and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta from catastrophic flooding in the next disaster supplemental request. This request is expected to be submitted to Congress by the end of the month. "California needs your help. The recent disasters along the Gulf Coast have focused attention on a major threat to our State — catastrophic flooding as a result of levee breaches," the lawmakers wrote in a letter to the President. "California urgently needs to reinforce its levee system and the necessary funding to address this infrastructure problem. The State is prepared to invest in this effort, and it is our strong desire that the federal government contributes its share and provides significant matching dollars. We ask that you include \$49.5 million for levee work and studies in the Administration's next Supplemental Appropriations request to the Congress." At the request of Senator Feinstein, the Army Corps of Engineers and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger developed a list of the highest priority items ready for immediate work, totaling \$92.7 million. The House and Senate versions of the FY2006 Energy and Water Appropriations bill each currently provide about \$38 million for ongoing flood-control related projects. The bills will soon be considered by a House-Senate Conference Committee. The additional funding from a Presidential supplemental request would ensure sufficient money for the current fiscal year to provide 95% of Sacramento with 100-year protection. It would also fund required studies to enable the Army Corps to begin construction on Delta levee improvements by 2007. "Further delay to the repairs necessary to protect Sacramento and the Delta region from the ravages of floodwaters could imperil hundreds of thousands of people and endanger most of the State's water supply," Senator Feinstein said. "California is prepared to address our infrastructure problem and invest in reinforcing our levee system. And I urge the federal government to do its part." "An ounce of prevention is definitely worth a pound of cure, and that is exactly what we are asking for here," Chairman Pombo said. "We need to do everything in our power now to prepare to the possibility of disaster striking at some point in the future." There is great risk of levee failure in California from a major earthquake. There are five faults in the vicinity of the Delta, and a recent study by the University of California has estimated that there is a 66 percent chance of an earthquake and subsequent flooding in the next 50 years. If there were a major failure with the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta levee system, homes and farms would be flooded and water supplies would be contaminated by salt water. This would jeopardize the drinking water for more than 20 million people and irrigation for over 3 million acres of our most productive agricultural land. Northern California has suffered serious floods twice in the last 20 years, and another significant flood could destroy tens of thousands of homes. "As we pursue Katrina recovery, a very high priority must be given to prevention and application of lessons learned for flood

control," Representative Matsui said. "My hope is that President Bush will take the opportunity to lead on this issue and urgently needed funds for Sacramento and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta's flood control efforts. Public safety cannot be compromised or be kept waiting." "We urgently need to address the issue of adequate flood protection by reinforcing California's levee system," Representative Lungren said. "We need a vision and plan for action now." "Communities in Yolo County and the Sacramento area face an unacceptably high risk of flooding from levee breaches in the Delta and along Cache Creek," Representative Thompson said. "We need the president's help to secure the funding needed to strengthen our regional levee system." Following is the letter sent to President Bush: October 20, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush: California needs your help. The recent disasters along the Gulf Coast have focused attention on a major threat to our State — catastrophic flooding as a result of levee breaches. California urgently needs to reinforce its levee system and the necessary funding to address this infrastructure problem. The State is prepared to invest in this effort, and it is our strong desire that the federal government contributes its share and provides significant matching dollars. We ask that you include \$49.5 million for levee work and studies in the Administration's next Supplemental Appropriations request to the Congress. California faces two major threats from breached levees: The first threat is to the City of Sacramento, which has the lowest flood protection of any major city in the country: approximately 85-year protection. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans had 250-year protection. This request will provide the city with 100-year flood protection. Greater Sacramento has suffered serious floods twice in the last 10 years, and another significant flood could destroy tens of thousands of homes. The second threat is to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta levee system. This network of earthen levees protects some of the most productive agricultural land in our Nation and our fresh water supply. If there were a major levee failure, homes and farms would be flooded and water supplies would be contaminated by salt water. This would jeopardize the drinking water for 20 million people and irrigation for over 3 million acres of our most productive agricultural land. There is great risk of levee failure from a major earthquake. There are five faults in the vicinity of the Delta, and a recent study by the University of California has estimated that there is a 66 percent chance of an earthquake and subsequent flooding in the next 50 years. To address this threat, we have consulted with the Army Corps of Engineers and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to develop a list of the highest priority items ready for immediate work, totaling \$92.7 million. We are asking for your support for \$49.5 million of this \$92.7 million package, specifically: 1. \$20 million, Sacramento River bank protection project 2. \$10 million, South Sacramento County Streams 3. \$16 million, American River Common Features 4. \$3 million, Delta Islands and Levees Feasibility Study to conduct the Delta Risk Management Strategy 5. \$500,000 for the CalFed 180-day Study

It is our hope that we can obtain this funding in Fiscal Year 2006. We would appreciate your Administration's assistance and ask that you seek these funds in the next Supplemental Appropriations request. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Member of Congress
Doris O. Matsui

Member of Congress
Daniel E. Lungren

Mike Thompson
Congress

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