

San Joaquin River Flood Control Association

Central San Joaquin River Association
Lower San Joaquin Levee District
Kings River Water Association
South Delta Water Agency
Upper San Joaquin River Association

23443 S. Hays Road
Manteca, CA 95337
November 23, 1999

Colonel Michael J. Walsh
District Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Dear Colonel Walsh:

We are writing with regard to the urgency of assuring a process for proceeding with Early Implementation Projects related to the Comprehensive Flood Protection Study of the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins. We are in strong support of the Comprehensive Study and greatly appreciate the time the study team has spent meeting with us and considering suggestions from us and other local interests.

We are aware that the implementation plan includes "early implementation" projects which have the potential to provide prompt flood damage reduction benefits as well as environmental benefits. We believe that these projects are highly cost effective and that the cost of early implementation is commensurate with the potential reduction in cost of repairing damage which they may provide even in a single flood event such as occurred in 1997.

In our bi-monthly Association meetings, we have discussed with the Comprehensive Study managers a number of potential "early implementation" projects that have been identified in the San Joaquin Valley. We believe that the general feasibility of these projects can be appraised through modeling and project development in the next six months, if given the proper priority for resources. A partial list includes:

- Improvements to the flood conveyance capacity and ecosystem at Paradise Cut and in Middle River.
- Removing hydraulic constraints from various bridge structures.
- Temporary storage of flood waters by restoration of natural overflow on wildlife refuge lands, state park lands and other public properties such as Grasslands State Park, the San Luis National Refuge, the Merced National Refuge, the Mendota Wildlife Area, etc.

The Association's purpose is to improve the hydraulic capacity of the channels of the San Joaquin River in order to minimize the risk of damage to adjacent lands.

- Improvements to the flood conveyance capacity through the main river near Grayson and Laird Slough.
- Developing transitory flood storage on the upper San Joaquin River.
- Developing additional offstream and transitory storage on the Tuolumne River.
- Possible measures to control sediments and water levels at the Mendota Pool.

These "early implementation" projects have the potential to provide immediate flood damage reduction benefits as well as environmental benefits, especially the first four projects. We ask that several of these projects be developed over the next six months so that they can be authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 - "subject to completion of the Chief of Engineers Report". We understand that this strategy has been used successfully by some agencies lately since the level of feasibility, environmental documentation and regulatory buyin necessary for these projects is generally less than that for "large flood control" projects, and it seems that these projects would be easier to achieve in a short time period.

To develop these "early implementation" projects and the master plans in time for WRDA 2000, we ask that the appropriate level of the Corps' most experienced and qualified staff be put in place immediately to develop support for the projects. We are working with regional congressional representatives to develop support for these projects. As always, the San Joaquin River Flood Control Association will be glad to assist in any way that we can.

We are aware that staff resources in the Sacramento District of the Corps are limited and are currently being arranged among many projects. However, we believe that project priorities should be directed toward developing these "early implementation" projects quickly so they can proceed quickly to authorization and construction. We are therefore sending copies of this letter to the attached list of concerned legislators and others to urge their active support.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,



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cc Reclamation Board