



INFORMATION ITEM

Delta Winter 2023 Flood Damage Assessment

Summary

The Council will receive a presentation on flood emergency response and recovery during the winter 2022/2023 high water events. The presentation will discuss roles and efforts in funding and carrying out emergency response, flood fighting, and levee repair. Sustained levee funding remains a critical need for California, including the Delta.

Background

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) is home to more than 625,000 people and is comprised of approximately 1,300 square miles of low-lying, flood-prone lands bound by 1,100 miles of levees.

The Suisun Marsh, located immediately downstream from the Delta and north of Grizzly Bay, includes about 230 miles of levees that reduce flood risk and help manage flows for wetlands. About 80 miles of these levees protect Delta water quality and terrestrial and aquatic habitat of statewide importance.

Levees in the Delta and Suisun Marsh reduce flood risk to people, property, water supply, the Delta ecosystem, and infrastructure of statewide importance. However, levee failure can cause catastrophic flooding and can potentially cause injury or loss of life, disrupt water supplies, and possibly damage property, infrastructure, and environmental resources of importance to the entire State.

The Delta Reform Act requires that the Delta Plan attempt to reduce risks to people, property, and State interests in the Delta by promoting effective emergency preparedness, appropriate land uses, and strategic levee investments (Water Code section 85305(a)). Delta Plan Policy RR P1 identifies emergency preparedness, response, and recovery as a key priority for levee funding.

Climate change is already altering the physical environment of the Delta and Suisun Marsh. Moving forward, climate change in the Delta will continue to adversely affect human health and safety, lead to economic disruptions, diminish water supply, degrade water quality, shift ecosystem function, and habitat qualities, and increase the challenges of providing basic services. Many of these impacts will disproportionately affect disadvantaged communities.

Flooding during the winter of 2022/2023 caused extensive damage throughout California. Delta reclamation districts were able to avoid levee breaches through their flood fighting and emergency response activities, but the high-water damaged levees, and interrupted power transmission, impacting reclamation districts' ability to provide interior drainage. The interior flooding led to crop loss and threatened public safety. This demonstrates the ongoing need for additional sustainable funding to support levees, and highlights the necessity of collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), stakeholders, and community members.

Today's presentation by Michael Moncrief of MBK Engineers will describe the extent of levee damage from the recent storms and the emergency response and recovery approaches taken by several reclamation districts during and following the storms. MBK Engineers serves as District Engineer for more than 20 Delta reclamation districts. DWR has been invited to comment on the funding available to support these efforts, the roles of the State and federal governments, and the need for sustainable levee funding.

Fiscal Information

Not applicable.

List of Attachments

No Attachments

Contact

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