

Information Item

Overview of the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan

Summary: To inform development of the Council's Delta Levees Investment Strategy (DLIS), and to prepare for upcoming discussions with the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Flood Board), staff from the Flood Board and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) will brief the Council about development of the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP) and other key activities of the Flood Board.

Background

The Delta Reform Act (Act) created the Council as an independent agency of the State vested with the authority to develop a comprehensive and legally enforceable management plan for the Delta (Delta Plan) that furthers the coequal goals. The Act mandates that all State agencies with responsibilities in the Delta shall cooperate with the Council in developing the Delta Plan, upon request of the Council (Water Code section 85300(b)). In addition, the Act stipulates that the Council shall consult with the Flood Board to recommend priorities for State investments in levee operation, maintenance, and improvements in the Delta, including both levees that are a part of the State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC) and nonproject levees (Water Code section 85306).

Role of the Central Valley Flood Protection Board

The Flood Board, originally chartered in 1911 as the Reclamation Board, serves as the liaison among the State, its residents, property owners, Central Valley agencies, and the federal government, with the mission "to reduce the risk of catastrophic flooding to people and property within the California Central Valley" while also considering environmental and habitat concerns.

The Flood Board is responsible for the preservation and protection of the present SPFC system, described on the next page, plus any improvements made to the system, such as those resulting from the implementation of the 2012 CVFPP.

The CVFPP was prepared by DWR in accordance with the Central Valley Flood Protection Act of 2008. DWR says the CVFPP is a comprehensive flood management plan for California, addressing flood risks in an integrated manner while concurrently improving ecosystem functions, operations and maintenance practices, and institutional support for flood management. The CVFPP was adopted by the Flood Board in June 2012. DWR is now working to update the CVFPP in 2017.

According to DWR, the CVFPP is not a decision document, but instead is intended to guide State maintenance and improvement activities for the SPFC facilities for which

the State is responsible. The Plan also lays out a comprehensive and strategic vision for better managing flood waters in the Central Valley.

About the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan

The CVFPP proposes a systemwide investment approach for sustainable and integrated flood management in areas currently protected by facilities of the SPFC.

The SPFC represents a portion of the Central Valley flood management system for which the State has special responsibilities, as defined in the California Water Code section 9110 (f).

Facilities that are not covered by the SPFC include the levee system in the Delta downstream from Collinsville on the Sacramento River and downstream from the Stockton area on the San Joaquin River that consist entirely of nonproject levees maintained by U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), (e.g., levees of the Sacramento and Stockton ship channels), or those maintained by local interests such as reclamation districts.

In preparing the 2012 CVFPP, DWR examined a range of potential approaches for improving flood management. The recommended approach – known as the State Systemwide Investment Approach (SSIA) – sets forth a strategy for meeting the State's objectives to improve public safety, ecosystem conditions, and economic sustainability, while recognizing the financial challenges facing local, State, and federal governments today.

Under this approach, the State will prioritize investments in flood risk reduction projects and programs that incorporate ecosystem restoration and multi-benefit projects, without precluding other actions should additional State and federal funding become available.

This SSIA is intended to support California's vital agricultural economy, maintain agricultural land uses, limit growth in undeveloped floodplains, and provide policies, programs, and incentives to encourage wise long-term floodplain management. The SSIA includes significant capital investments to strengthen levees that protect existing urban areas and small communities, prioritizing improvements to the 1,600-mile levee system included in the SPFC. The SSIA also is intended to help improve system resiliency in the face of climate change by expanding flood conveyance capacities, coordinating reservoir operations, and restoring floodplains.

The 2017 Update

While the 2012 CVFPP set the framework, DWR says the 2017 update will build on and refine the systemwide approach while still maintaining a focus on lands currently protected by the SPFC.

In May, the Council sent a comment letter to DWR regarding the Draft Sacramento River Basin-Wide Feasibility Study (BWFS), noting that, while likely not a covered action, the study should demonstrate use of best available science and include

monitoring plans with measurable objectives. In addition to monitoring habitat creation and removal, monitoring use of the habitats by intended species can provide useful feedback to guide performance improvement over time.

The letter also said that, although we agree with a basin-wide approach, DWR should investigate and evaluate any potential downstream affects to the Delta in the development of the BWFS and relevant environmental impact assessments. According to the BFWS hydraulic analyses, the outcome of the proposed modifications to the Yolo Bypass may increase the flood stage 0.1-0.2 feet near the Rio Vista area. DWR proposes to construct a flood wall along the Sacramento River near Rio Vista as a flood risk reduction measure; however, we pointed out that it is unclear how this increased flood stage will impact the Delta.

In April, the Council sent a letter commenting on the Notice of Preparation for the 2017 CVFPP Update's Supplemental Program Environmental Impact Report (SPEIR). We noted that the 2012 Plan recognized the role of the Council and its Delta Plan, which was then in draft form. It is likely that the 2017 CVFPP Update would be considered a covered action and, additionally, many of the individual flood system improvement projects analyzed programmatically by the CVFPP SPEIR could also be covered actions and would also need to be designed and developed consistent with the Delta Plan.

Nexus of the Delta Plan and the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan

On July 22, Council staff and members of the Arcadis team made a presentation to the Flood Board. The presentation included an overview of the DLIS project including project background, major milestones that had been reached, and next steps in the project development. The purpose of the presentation was to inform the Flood Board about the approach being taken to develop the DLIS and how this information may be used by the Council to amend the Delta Plan.

For today's briefing, staff from the Flood Board and DWR will brief the Council about development of the CVFPP, the 2017 CVFPP Update, and other key activities of the Flood Board.

Next Steps

On August 12, the Flood Board staff will join Council staff for a joint workshop at the Galleria in West Sacramento to discuss project status, coordination of efforts, and next steps. The workshop between the two agencies will provide a transparent and public opportunity for consultation about the priorities for State investment in the Delta's project and non-project levees that is required by Water Code section 85306. Topics the Council may consider for discussion during the August joint workshop include:

- What State interests in the Delta should nonstructural flood risk reduction measures and investments in Delta project and non-project levees further?
- How congruent are the Delta Plan and the CVFPP's initial recommendations about nonstructural flood risk reduction measures and investments in the Delta's

project and non-project levees? What significant disagreements, if any, are there between the plans?

- How could the Council's recommendations about State investment in the Delta's project and non-project levees affect the Flood Board's responsibilities to approve criteria for the maintenance and improvement of nonproject levees under the Delta Levee Subventions Program (Water Code section 12984)?
- What provision, if any, should the Council be making in its Delta levee update to the Delta Plan about actions outside the Delta that could significantly reduce flood risk in the Delta?
- How should the Delta Plan's ecosystem restoration provisions reflect the Central Valley Flood System Conservation Strategy?

An additional objective of the workshop will be discussion of how members of the Council and the Flood Board can best continue consulting with each other as the updates of the CVFPP and the Council's DLIS are finalized.

Panel Members

- Leslie Gallagher, Executive Officer, Central Valley Flood Protection Board
- Nancy Moricz, Central Valley Flood Protection Board
- Mary Jimenez, Department of Water Resources

Fiscal Information

Not applicable.

List of Attachments

None.

Contact

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