

RECLAMATION DISTRICT No. 999

Netherlands

38563 Netherlands Road
Clarksburg, California 95612-5003

August 16, 2019

Erin Mullin, P.E., Senior Engineer
Delta Stewardship Council
980 Ninth Street, Suite 1500
Sacramento, CA 95814

Sent via email to: oal_amendRRP1@deltacouncil.ca.gov

Subject: Comments on the Proposed Rulemaking to Implement Delta Plan Amendment Regarding Delta Levees Investment Strategy

Dear Ms. Mullin:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Delta Stewardship Council's proposed changes to §5001 and §5012 in Title 23 of the California Code of Regulations to implement the Delta Levees Investment Strategy (DLIS). The proposed amendments to the DSC Prioritization of State Investments in Delta Levees are contrary to clauses in the existing water code and would severely restrict the Delta levee districts' ability to responsibly maintain the existing flood control system.

Reclamation District No. 999, Netherlands, is in the process of working towards active status in the USACE PL 84-99 RIP. This is the busy time of year where we implement 80% of our annual maintenance prior to the flood season. Most of this work is performed assuming the Delta Levee Subventions Program will reimburse eligible expenses. We are also administering a FSRP erosion repair project, developing a Five-Year Plan and utilizing FMAP funding to support LOI/SWIF development and collaboration with the other RDs within our system. We are utilizing all available support to maintain our system effectively. We are only successful as a collaborative group, with support from DWR, CVFPB, and the DSC to maintain this SPFC system.

The Delta Plan provides generic definitions for "levee improvement", "levee maintenance", and "levee rehabilitation". In the rulemaking, the proposed definitions are not aligned with the existing Federal Regulations (33 CFR 208.10), and the California Water Code (Title 23) already defines "Maintenance". This proposed amendment is in direct conflict with the CVFPB's *Resolution No. 2018-06*, which defines operations, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement (OMRR&R), and identifies the CVFPB's requirement to meet their responsibility for OMRR&R for SPFC facilities, as well as the importance of obtaining active status in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) P.L. 84-99 program. The Reclamation Districts must adhere to the policies set by the CVFPB or they risk being taken over and becoming the responsibility of the State. Proposing new definitions in the California Code will severely limit maintenance of levees in the Delta and will lead to further disagreement regarding how investment decisions are made for levee operations, maintenance, and improvements.

The State must be aligned on future investments to Delta levees, as it is critical to the continued functionality of the flood system and maintenance of the Delta in its entirety. The Delta Levee Subventions program has provided Delta reclamation districts a consistent funding mechanism to plan and implement levee maintenance and rehabilitation. Reclamation Districts rely on the Subventions program to make such necessary repairs. DWR has developed functional programs to assist both non-project and project levees to rehabilitate and repair damages, supporting flood recovery efforts, and deferred maintenance.

We have continued to maintain and rehabilitate our SPFC system, which protects vital state, regional resources, local infrastructure and productive private agricultural lands. Losing the ability to efficiently participate in available funding due to this rulemaking would be to the detriment and risk of the protected lands, resources of the state and region, and vital infrastructure.

We encourage the Council to consider alternate definitions or avoid significant changes to existing definitions and regulations. We also request an extension of the proposed rulemaking for DSC staff to coordinate with the Delta stakeholders, DWR and the CVFPB in further development of consistent and serviceable Title 23 amendment language.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to further coordination with you and your staff. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Michael Moncrief with MBK Engineers at (916) 456-4400.

Respectfully submitted,
RECLAMATION DISTRICT No. 999



Tom Slater, President

cc: MBK Engineers