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DWR Announces \$246 Million in Funding for Central Valley Urban Flood Protection Projects

SACRAMENTO — The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced today proposed funding recommendations for projects that will lower flood risk for thousands of Central Valley residents and also improve wildlife habitat.

The projects would be funded through \$246 million in Proposition 1E funding that was appropriated as part of the \$1 billion drought-relief legislative package enacted in March 2015. The proposed projects further the goal of the Governor’s California Water Action Plan to increase flood protection for the more than seven million people and \$580 billion in assets exposed to flood hazard in California. Steady investment is needed to manage the floods and drought that are features of California’s climate and expected to become more extreme as average temperatures rise with global warming.

“We are in the midst of drought now,” said DWR Director Mark Cowin, “but flood looms every winter in California, especially in the Central Valley, where our major rivers drain. Integrated, multi-benefit projects like those we announced for tentative funding today improve public safety and help the state cope with the more extreme weather we expect with climate change.”

DWR proposes to fund seven projects, along with \$104 million previously authorized by the Legislature for improvements in the city of West Sacramento. Together, the projects will help provide a higher level of flood protection for urban areas behind Federal-State levees.

There are between 13,000 and 14,000 miles of levees in California. In the 1950s, the State committed to maintain about 1,600 miles of federal levees in the Central Valley; these levees are called Federal-State levees. Local agencies originally built the levees, and today, local agencies are responsible for maintaining these levees in coordination with DWR and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These levees protect not only local lives, property and infrastructure, they also are part of California’s water delivery system.

The projects proposed for funding would protect development in communities including Stockton, Lathrop, Sacramento, Yuba City, Live Oak, Biggs, Linda, Olivehurst, Plumas Lake and Woodland. The projects also collectively involve nearly 20 miles of levee repair and improvement that would provide a range of potential benefits including:

- Protection for 600,000 people and over \$100 billion in assets;
- Four miles of setback levee, providing 185 acres of increased habitat in the waterway;

- Over 2,000 acres of ecosystem habitat opportunities.

The seven projects recommended for funding today were proposed in applications received by DWR in response to the Program's January 2015 Proposal Solicitation Package. Nine proposals were received requesting \$566 million in funding, which exceeded available funds for the program. Seven projects are recommended to receive partial or full funding, and the remaining projects are recommended to be considered for funding through a more appropriate alternative funding source at a later date.

The funding recommendations are in accordance with the *2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan*, which defined the State's investment priorities for flood management. The proposed improvements will help address the State's most pressing water management challenges as described in the Governor's California Water Action Plan; for example, they are intended to make the Federal-State flood control system more resilient and lower the risk of damage from earthquakes and climate change-induced sea level rise.

The public may comment on these recommendations for the next 15 days. The public comment period ends at 5:00 pm on May 29, 2015. The project descriptions and instructions for submitting public comments can be found at: <http://www.water.ca.gov/floodmgmt/fpo/guidelines/>.

For more than two years, California has been dealing with the effects of drought. To learn about all the actions the state has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit Drought.CA.Gov.

Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at SaveOurWater.com.

