



### **Delta Counties Coalition**

Contra Costa County · Sacramento County · San Joaquin County · Solano County · Yolo County

*"Working together on water and Delta issues"*

April 27, 2021

Dear Members of the Delta Congressional Delegation:

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Counties Coalition (DCC), a consortium of Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo Counties formed to speak with one voice on the health of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, urges you to fully fund the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program and allow such assistance to be used to support all authorized purposes, and needed non-federal levee work, at a minimum.

As you know, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, limited the use of Corps WIFIA loan assistance to non-federal safety of dams work identified in the National Inventory of Dams. We ask that you expand the eligible uses of this important assistance to include non-federal levees identified in the Corps' National Levee Database. The Corps WIFIA program would create an opportunity for the State of California and its non-federal partners to access long-term, low-cost federally backed financing to support and accelerate non-federal investments to repair the Delta's non-federal levees. An allocation of a minimum of \$25 million to the Corps' WIFIA program would generate no less than \$2.2 billion in 35-year, low-cost federally backed financing (today's rates are 2.44 percent) to support needed levee work and similar projects nationwide.

The Sacramento region is generally acknowledged as having the highest flood risk in the nation due to the Central Valley's land elevation requiring thousands of miles of levees to protect lives, property, and the environment. Roughly 1,115 miles of levees protect farms, businesses, cities, schools, people, water quality, and a unique ecosystem of national significance in and around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The Delta also is a crucial component of California's overall water supply system for 24 million people. Delta levees create the freshwater pathway to allow water from state and federal reservoirs to flow to state and federal water export pumps in the south Delta. Many Delta levees, however, are in need of improvement and all require constant maintenance to keep pace with flood risks. Strengthening these vulnerable levees not only protects people, property, and public infrastructure, but also habitat and open space.

Since 2005, approximately \$650 million (combined State and local funds) has been invested in levee maintenance and improvement through the State Delta Levees Subventions and Special Projects Programs. Despite the commitment of these State and local resources, significant risks remain, especially as we face rising sea levels under climate change. Depending on the level of flood protection, estimates for needed non-federal Delta levee improvements are in the range of \$1 billion.

Again, we ask that you work to include full funding for the Corps' WIFIA program and expand the eligible uses of this important assistance to, at a minimum, include safety projects to maintain,

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upgrade and repair non-federal levees identified in the Corps' National Levee Database. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Don Nottoli  
Supervisor, Sacramento County



Mitch Mashburn  
Supervisor, Solano County



Karen Mitchoff  
Supervisor, Contra Costa  
County



Oscar Villegas  
Supervisor, Yolo County



Chuck Winn  
Supervisor, San Joaquin  
County