

Committee on Resources

Subcommittee on Water & Power

Testimony

May 26, 1998

TO: Honorable John Doolittle, Chairman, Subcommittee on Water and Power

SUBJECT: May 27, 1998 Special Hearing in Sacramento, California Regarding Folsom Dam Modifications

Dear Congressman Doolittle:

I would like to thank you and your subcommittee for all of the support you have given this region over the years. Once again we would like to ask for your subcommittee's support.

Currently, the City of Sacramento's 375,000 residents and \$30 billion in damageable property are at risk of flooding. The risk of flooding in Sacramento is greater than in any similar sized river city in the United States. Presently, Sacramento has less than an 80-year level of flood protection. This low level of flood protection means that there is a 1.3 percent chance that the City of Sacramento will suffer a flood in any given year, or a 26 percent chance over the 30-year life of a home mortgage.

In 1992 and again in 1996, the City of Sacramento supported building a flood control dam at Auburn, California. This solution, had it been implemented by the Congress, would have provided a high level of flood protection (400-year +) to the City of Sacramento. Unfortunately, neither the Congress nor the Administration approved the Auburn Dam project. In March 1996, the Corps of Engineers, in their Supplemental Report on the American River Watershed Project, identified other cost effective alternatives besides Auburn Dam that, if implemented, would increase the level of flood protection for the City. These alternatives included the common elements, modifications to Folsom Dam, and downstream levee improvements. Due to the lack of Congressional support for an Auburn Dam, the City of Sacramento's decision makers now support the Folsom Dam Modification and Levee Improvement Project which provides the next highest level of flood protection for the region.

The Folsom Dam Modification and Levee Improvement Project if implemented would increase City of Sacramento's level of flood protection from 80-years to 160-years. We believe this project will minimize impacts on water and power users as well as the environment. If lower level river gates can be constructed in place of lowering the spillway gates, traffic disruption in the City of Folsom will be minimized. Safe levees can be designed and constructed to reliably and safely pass current and future design flows. The Corps of Engineers and the locals are firmly committed to mitigate any significant upstream or downstream hydraulic impacts thereby ensuring the higher flows pass safely through the Sacramento flood control system.

In summary, a 100-year flood event in Sacramento would likely cause in excess of \$7 billion in property damage and loss of life. In comparison to other Federal disasters, a major flood in Sacramento would be more devastating than any disaster to date. We can no longer allow Sacramento's residents and businesses to remain at such a high flood risk. Please help us achieve badly needed flood protection for this region now.

The City of Sacramento requests that the Subcommittee on Water and Power recommend Congressman Matsui's legislation for the Folsom Dam Modifications and Downstream Levee Improvement Project be included in the 1998 Water Resources Development Act. We thank you in advance for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,
Albert E. McCollam, Jr.
Acting Director
Department of Utilities
City of Sacramento

Statement Outline

- Sacramento at Risk
 - 375,000 residents
 - \$30 billion in damageable property
- Auburn Dam
 - Would provide 400-year plus level of protection
 - Could not be authorized in 1992 or 1996 WRDA
- Folsom Dam Modifications and Downstream Levee Improvements
 - Double City's level of protection
 - Minimize impacts on power and water as well as to the environment
 - May be designed to minimize traffic impacts in the City of Folsom
 - Levee can be designed and built to safely pass future design flows

Recommendation:

Request the Subcommittee on Water and Power recommend the Folsom Dam Modifications and Downstream Levee Improvement Project be included in the 1998 Water Resources Development Act.

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