

Central Valley Flood Protection Board Meeting
July 22, 2016

INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING

DELTA LEVEES INVESTMENT STRATEGY

(Dustin Jones, Delta Stewardship Council)

BRIEFING SUMMARY

Background

Since the 1970s, the State of California (State) has committed approximately \$700 million to the Delta levee system for operation, maintenance, and improvements. However, the State does not currently have a long-term strategy to guide future investment of its limited funds.

The Delta Reform Act of 2009 called on the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) to lead a multi-agency effort to develop priorities for State investments in the Delta levee system to reduce the likelihood and consequences of levee failures, while advancing the coequal goals of improving water supply reliability and restoring the Delta ecosystem. This is reflected in the Delta Plan's recommendation RR R4 (Actions for the Prioritization of State Investments in Delta Levees)

In response, the Council has launched the Delta Levees Investment Strategy (DLIS) that will combine economics, engineering, and decision-making techniques to identify funding priorities and assemble a comprehensive investment strategy for the Delta levees.

This investment strategy will be developed in collaboration with State agencies, local reclamation districts, Delta landowners and businesses, and other interested stakeholders. It will be based on the best available data, research, and lessons learned from other State and local programs and planning efforts.

Current Status

In the spring of 2015, the Council approved a list of State interests for further consideration during development of the DLIS. The Council directed staff to continue to evaluate these interests as they develop the DLIS and report back to the Council with the results of these evaluations. These State interests have been used along with an evaluation of how likely levees are to fail in the Delta and Suisun Marsh to develop a risk analysis.

In the summer of 2015, an independent science panel reviewed the methodology developed by the DLIS team and provided feedback and suggestions for consideration.

Suggestions from the independent review have been used to make revisions to the methodology for evaluating risks to State interests.

In the fall of 2015, the Council approved a statement of Delta Flood Management Investment Strategy principles. These principles have been used to guide the development of the Delta Levees Investment Strategy, which is being developed to implement the Delta Plan's recommendation RR R4.

Over the past few months, the Delta Levees Investment Strategy (DLIS) team has provided the Council updates on representing State interests in the Decision Support Tool (DST) and estimates of risk to those State interests. At the April 2016 Council meeting the DLIS team presented maps showing where State interests are protected by levees within the Delta and Suisun Marsh and also, in the case of habitat, where potential tidal habitats could be restored if levees were altered. At the May 2016 Council meeting the project team presented maps showing where risks to State interests had been identified within the Delta and Suisun Marsh.

Next Steps

The information developed as part of the risk analysis, along with existing statutes and input from stakeholders, will be used by the Council to develop a strategy for State investments to reduce risk to State interests in the Delta and Suisun Marsh.

At the July Council meeting, the DLIS team will present potential prioritizations of State investments in Delta levees based on risk to State interests. Staff will seek input from the Council members and stakeholders to inform an initial staff recommendation on prioritization of State investments in Delta levees and other levee-related provisions.

In August, CVFPB staff will join Council staff in a joint workshop to discuss project status, coordination of efforts, and next steps. At the August Council meeting, staff will present an initial recommendation on prioritization of State investments in Delta levees and other potential new, levee-related Delta Plan provisions.

In September the Council will be asked to take action on these draft recommendations so that staff can use the draft recommendations in public outreach sessions to solicit input and comments.

By the end of the year, the Council will develop recommendations, including prioritization of State investments in Delta levees and other potential new, levee-related Delta Plan provisions. These will be used to amend the Delta Plan and to develop a report to the legislature.