

Central Valley Flood Protection Board Meeting

INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING

UPDATE ON STATE RESPONSE TO THE LETTER TO THE BOARD REGARDING LEVEES
AND CHANNELS OF THE LOWER AN JOAQUIN LEVEE DISTRICT WITHN THE SAN
JOAQUIN RIVER FLOOD CONTROL SYSTEM UPSTREAM OF THE MERCED RIVER

BRIEFING SUMMARY

Background

In July 2015, the Board received a letter from Colonel Michael Farrell, District Commander of the Sacramento District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The letter stated that, following a periodic inspection of the levees of the Lower San Joaquin Levee district (LSJLD), the USACE determined that the levee system had not been congressionally authorized and therefore, was not part of the federal flood risk reduction structures.

For the approximately 60 years prior to receipt of this letter, the local, State and federal parties had operated the system as part of the overall federal flood control system and State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC) facilities, and substantial financial commitments had been made over the years into the operation and improvement of these levees.

Following receipt of the letter, the Board and DWR began an investigation into the history of that portion of the flood control project, and have spent considerable time searching for documents and Board meeting minutes which would clearly explain the history of the project to better understand how to proceed in the future. DWR and the Board's former Chief Engineer were the leads on gathering information. DWR legal has stepped in to finish the gathering of many old, one-of-a-kind, non-digitized documents stored in various locations around the State. The investigation is continuing.

Current Status

Many documents have been located by DWR and Board staff but many questions remain. Once the State completes its research, we anticipate sending a letter to USACE asking for further information as to how this determination was reached and what supporting factual documentation was used. DWR and Board staff intend to analyze all of the relevant documentation prior to formulating any substantive response to the USACE, recognizing that, if the USACE position is allowed to stand, the use of funds for regional flood management efforts in this part of the system may be adversely affected and the ability of this portion of the flood system to obtain State and federal financial support for repairs, urban flood enhancements, etc. will be in jeopardy. Further updates will be provided to the Board when all of the documents have been gathered and analyzed.