



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STOCKTON PROPERTY OWNERS SAY YES TO \$1.4 BILLION IN LEVEE IMPROVEMENTS

STOCKTON, CA – Approximately \$1.4 billion in levee improvements are on the way to north and central Stockton, thanks in large part to support from property owners who agreed to pay an annual property assessment to fund a portion of the work. On Thursday, the SJAFCA Board of Directors adopted its Levee Construction and Maintenance Assessment after receiving the official results of balloting, a 45-day process during which owners of approximately 94,000 properties considered whether to take on increased costs for levee maintenance, as well as the local cost share for 23 miles of levee improvements along the San Joaquin and Calaveras Rivers. Results showed that 58 percent of the weighted vote was in favor of the assessment.

“Stockton property owners who benefit from these levee improvements are being offered an unprecedented opportunity – for every \$1 they invest, they’ll receive \$9 in state and federal funding,” said Gary Singh, Chair of the SJAFCA Board of Directors. “The result will be an increased level of flood protection that’s on par with other large urban areas in the Central Valley, and one that improves our resiliency to rapid swings in weather and changing economic conditions.”

SJAFCA and the San Joaquin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Zone 9 (Zone 9) jointly proposed the Levee Construction and Maintenance Assessment to: 1) fund the local cost share (10%) for the \$1.4B Lower San Joaquin River Project (\$140M); 2) ensure continued FEMA accreditation of the levees protecting North and Central Stockton; and 3) address a \$1.5M annual shortfall between existing and needed revenues for the proper maintenance of Zone 9 levees.

The risks of not having adequate funding for levee maintenance and improvements are costly, according to SJAFCA. Aside from increasing physical flood risk, the community would be faced with the potential loss of FEMA accreditation on Zone 9 levees, which triggers mandatory flood insurance for properties with mortgages, the loss of eligibility for federal funding to reimburse Zone 9 for emergency levee repairs, and the loss of \$1.2 billion in state and federally-funded levee repairs.

For those reasons, among others, the assessment proposal garnered significant support from across the community, logging endorsements from the Business Council of San Joaquin, the Stockton Chamber of Commerce, Restore the Delta, and the San Joaquin Building & Construction Trades Council.

“Only a very small percentage of Stockton property owners carry flood insurance,” said Betty Wilson, Executive Director of the Business Council of San Joaquin. “If we suffered a large-scale flood, we wouldn’t have the collective economic capacity to recover quickly or well. That makes investing in flood prevention even more critical for the long-term economic viability of our community.”

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Property owners won't wait long for the benefit of improved flood protection. Construction will start next year on the first leg of the project, which involves improvements to the dryland levee on Tenmile Slough adjacent to the Brookside community. The levee is considered the most critically deficient among those to be improved, as the levee isn't expected to withstand a harsh combination of high water and wind wave action. Other elements of the project include improvements to Fourteen Mile Slough, the east bank of the San Joaquin River adjacent to the Van Buskirk community, both banks of the Calaveras River, and Mosher Slough. The entire project is expected to take 10 years to complete.

"We appreciate the trust property owners are placing in us to make this project and improved levee maintenance a reality," said SJAFCA Executive Director Chris Elias. "SJAFCA and Zone 9 will honor that trust by delivering the higher level of flood protection that this community needs and deserves."

Property owners with questions can contact SJAFCA's Assessment District Hotline at 209-475-7010, or email at LCMA@sjgov.org.

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***The San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency (SJAFCA)** is responsible for reducing flood risk for the greater-Stockton metropolitan region through planning, financing and implementing projects and programs to improve flood protection.*

***The San Joaquin County Flood Control & Water Conservation District Zone 9 (Zone 9)**, a division of San Joaquin County, maintains urban levees that protect approximately 90,000 Stockton properties.*