



THREE RIVERS LEVEE IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 10, 2010

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TRLIA SUBMITS LEVEE CERTIFICATION AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

MARYSVILLE, CA – A long pause to appreciate the moment. That was the reaction from some members of the Board of the Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority (TRLIA) when informed that a major milestone – the submission of a levee system certification package to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – had been met several weeks ahead of schedule, and nine months in advance of updates to FEMA’s flood insurance rate maps for Yuba County.

“This is a perfect example of a government agency doing exactly what it promised to do and living up to its commitments,” said Mary Jane Griego, Chair of both TRLIA and the Yuba County Board of Supervisors. “First and foremost, this is about making sure we won’t go through another disaster like 1986 and 1997,” she said, speaking to the major flood events that devastated Yuba County and collective caused about \$600 million in damages and several deaths. “The Board of Supervisors and Reclamation District 784 took on this tremendous challenge. Through the Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority, we accomplished what many thought was unachievable. We made good on our promise to improve public safety through strong leadership, dogged determination, sacrifices and good old fashioned sweat,” she said.

The significance of the levee certification is not lost on Yuba County Supervisor and TRLIA Board Member John Nicoletti. “This is huge. It’s a momentous contribution to our community, along the lines of Bullard’s Bar and Oroville Dam,” he said. “These are public safety improvements, but they are also critical to the economic sustainability of our County into the future.”

TRLIA, a joint powers authority of Yuba County and Reclamation District 784 (RD 784), has been working diligently since 2004 to implement \$405 million in levee improvements and repairs to 29 miles of levees maintained by RD 784. The levees, excluding a Provisionally Accredited Levee on the Upper Yuba River, are now certified to protect against the 100-year flood and meet Federal standards for flood protection. The certification package submitted to FEMA is expected to result in levee system accreditation, which will take into account the anticipated completion of the Upper Yuba River levee work in early 2011.

Design and construction of the recent repairs were accomplished using the criteria developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). The certification means that the appropriate standard of care has been followed to certify that the RD 784 Levee System meets federal criteria, and is eligible for accreditation.

Levee accreditation by FEMA means that areas in Linda, Olivehurst, Arboga and Plumas Lake – except those affected by internal drainage issues – will avoid being remapped into a Special Flood Hazard Area when FEMA’s new Flood Insurance Rate Maps go into effect early next year. Property owners outside Special Flood Hazard Areas will not be required to purchase higher-cost, mandatory flood insurance.

“We’ll continue to work with our reclamation districts to improve public safety through flood protection improvements, and resolve any outstanding internal drainage issues that could otherwise impede our progress toward removal of properties from FEMA 100-year floodplains,” said Kevin Mallen, the County’s floodplain manager and director of Community

“The levee construction program has been a colossal effort,” said Paul Brunner, TRLIA’s executive director. “Many thanks go to the leadership and residents of Yuba County for believing in us and supporting our efforts,” he said. “We also had a lot of help and support from the Yuba County, RD 784, Yuba County Water Agency, local landowners, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, DWR, the Department of Fish & Game, the USACE, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,” he said.

TRLIA, Yuba County, the Yuba County Water Agency and RD 784 are also partnering to address 200-year flood protection in the Goldfields and develop solutions to decrease any associated flood risk. The USACE studied flood risk in the Goldfields, located north of Marysville, as part of its Yuba Basin Feasibility Study. According to the USACE, the Goldfields does not present a risk of flooding to areas protected by RD 784 levees from a 100-year flood event.

“The success of TRLIA’s program puts us in an excellent position to achieve these milestones elsewhere in the County,” said Robert Bendorf, County CAO. “We have the knowledge, experience and commitment to make it happen.”

For more information, please contact Paul Brunner, TRLIA Executive Director, at (530) 749-5679.

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The Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority, a joint powers agency, was established in May 2004 by the county of Yuba and Reclamation District 784 to finance and construct levee improvements. Four work phases were identified with the goal of achieving 200-year flood protection for areas protected by Reclamation District 784 levees. www.trlia.org