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COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

December 19, 2011

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The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
108 Army Pentagon
Room 3E446
Washington, DC 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary Darcy:

I am writing to strongly urge you to program construction funds for the Santa Maria River Levees project in the Fiscal Year 2012 work plan for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project has strong community support and would provide tremendous benefits to the City of Santa Maria and northern Santa Barbara County.

After completing construction of the Santa Maria River Levees project in 1963, the Corps completed a Design Deficiency Report (DDR) in 1976 calling for specific improvements to the levee project. Those fixes were not implemented at that time. In 2008, the Corps completed a Supplemental DDR recommending many of the same improvements. Using roughly \$30 million in funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Corps rehabilitated three levee reaches along the Santa Maria River late last year.

During construction of the stimulus rehabilitation, it became known that the Corps would need to extend the project 3,700 feet easterly to include an additional section of levee and provide complete flood protection to the City of Santa Maria. To add this section to the project, the Corps initiated an addendum to the Supplemental DDR, which is expected to be completed this year. The Corps expects the extension project to cost \$10.8 million, which includes both design and construction costs. The Corps has \$4.1 million on hand from prior fiscal years, yet still needs roughly \$3.8 million to complete construction of the extension.

The Corps originally thought the work completed to date would protect the 100,000 residents of the City of Santa Maria from a 100-year flood event. Unfortunately, we now know that without the completion of the 3,700 foot extension, the project could still be undermined by a significant flood. New flood maps are under development by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and would create severe economic hardship for the roughly 20,000 properties in the City that would likely be placed in a flood plain because of the incomplete levee project.

I strongly encourage you to program construction funds for the Santa Maria River Levees in the Fiscal Year 2012 work plan for the Army Corps of Engineers. Thank you for your consideration of this important request for my constituents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lois Capps". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress