



FEMA Funding for Floodplain Management & Dam and Levee Safety

SUPPORT S.1938, the Flood Mapping Act of 2007, to protect the integrity of the National Flood Insurance Program and fund Phase II of Map Modernization at \$400 million per year.

SUPPORT H.R.3224, the National Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act of 2007, to provide \$200 million in grant assistance over five years to rehabilitate failing non-federal dams that fall short of minimum safety standards and pose an unacceptable risk to the public.

SUPPORT reauthorization of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture, Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL 83-566), Small Watershed Dams Rehabilitation Program, at \$50 million per year for four years.

SUPPORT funding of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, Title IX (\$120 million) authorizing a National Levee Safety Program.

PROVIDE funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to survey and inventory levees throughout the nation on a cost-shared basis.

Historically, floods are the most frequent, destructive, and costly natural hazard facing the state of Texas, constituting 90 percent of total damage from all disasters. From 1975 to 1998, Texas recorded \$10.2 billion in property damage from floods alone. Texas' population is projected to grow by almost 60 percent by the year 2030. This growth will affect every facet of the lives of our citizens and will expose more people and property to flood hazards. Today, the state of Texas faces the challenges of high flood losses, an increasing risk of flooding events, and rapid population growth putting more people and property in harm's way.

Recent flooding in Texas and the impacts of Hurricanes Rita and Claudette have emphasized the need for a coordinated watershed approach to address Texas' flooding issues. Texas has both opportunity and challenge to take a larger role with the Administration and Congress in preparing for and recovering from natural disasters. Our communities must equip themselves with the tools to prepare for, mitigate

against, respond to, and recover from floods. Local and regional governments rely on the several federal agencies – such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Corps of Engineers, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service – to assist them with flooding issues.

The Texas Legislature recently passed SB 1436, providing over \$3 million per year in state funding to improve Texas' coordination of the National Flood Insurance Program. However, Texas will need to partner with FEMA to update floodplain maps, as over half of its counties did not benefit from FEMA's Map Modernization Project and most communities received little to no new information on their new maps. Further, Texas has very little information and no funding to help identify the location, adequacy, and condition of its levee system that protects floodplains in many communities. Finally, many dams in Texas that provide water supply while protecting floodplains are aging and need significant improvement to withstand severe floods.

FEMA Funding, *continued*

We are grateful to Congress and the Administration for the Map Modernization Initiative. Development of new data and digitizing of that data have greatly improved the quality of risk information and its accessibility. However, map modernization still requires additional investments to maximize the potential to protect lives and property. Because accurate maps must reflect the dynamic nature of floodplains and because the major floods of recent years have pointed to further mapping needs, the investments made so far will pay even greater dividends when:

- Up-to-date digital maps are extended to all NFIP participating communities;
- Data are collected and shown regarding levees, their location and condition;
- Data are collected on coastal flood hazards, the 500 year floodplain, and areas that would be affected by failure of flood control structures;
- Data are included from other federal sources (USACE, USGS, NOAA, USGS);

- Improved risk assessment enhances communication of flood risk; and
- Changing flood hazards are assessed as an ongoing task.

FEMA programs assist communities with planning for the real threat of flooding and other natural disasters to communities. They provide Texas communities the resources and tools to address long-term flooding problems through pre- and post disaster mitigation programs. FEMA's pre-disaster mitigation programs are ongoing efforts to help both large and small communities better understand how to lessen the impact disasters have on people and property. FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Flood Mitigation Assistance are two programs serving as major funding sources (75 percent federal) to acquire repetitive loss structures and relocate citizens out of harm's way.

