

## Federal Funding For Floodplain Management, Levee, and Dam Safety

### BACKGROUND

Floods are the most frequent, destructive, and costly natural hazard facing our nation and the State of Texas. The recent tragedies on the Gulf Coast and in the Midwest are reminders that we are very susceptible to floods. Texas faces the risk of higher flood losses, due to rapid population growth which may put more people and property in harm's way. The tools we have to prepare for these floods and reduce future losses are floodplain management, levees, and flood control dams.

Floodplain Management – Effectively identifying, managing, and mitigating floodplains reduces flood disaster costs. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Map Modernization Initiative has successfully converted national flood data to a common digital platform and is a tremendous benefit for many communities. However, many Texas communities have not been studied, have outdated information, or did not get new maps. Therefore, Texas strongly supports FEMA's new RiskMap Initiative, which addresses the remaining needs, and the passage of FEMA's 2009 budget to allow its implementation.



Levee Safety – Levees protect floodplains in many Texas communities, holding back tidal surges and riverine floods. Inventories and evaluations of these levees are needed to determine if the protection they provide is adequate. The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) authorized a National Levee Safety Committee, including a national Levee Inventory, and incentives for state involvement. Texas strongly supports the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' requested level of funding for authorized WRDA initiatives in 2009 to implement these critical programs, including the inventory of both federal and non-federal levees in Texas.

Dam Safety -Dams bring water, power, flood control, recreation, economic possibilities and many other advantages to people. But safe operation and maintenance is critical to sustaining these advantages and avoiding potential disaster. While federally owned dams are in good condition, the number of non-federal dams identified as unsafe is increasing. Texas endorses passage of H.R. 3224 to create a federally administered dam rehabilitation funding program. This federally sponsored program would provide funds to be cost-shared at 65 percent federal to 35 percent state/local for non-federal publicly owned dams. The legislation would provide funds to states based on the number of high hazard dams in each of the participating states.



💧 **SUPPORT:** FEMA's FY2009 & FY2010 budget request, and further, support legislation in the 111th Congress to protect the integrity of the National Flood Insurance Program and fund RiskMap (follow-up to Map Modernization) at a level of \$400 million per year.

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- ◆ **SUPPORT:** Reintroduction of The National Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act of 2007 (HR 3224 in 110th) to provide \$200 million in grant assistance over five years to rehabilitate non-federal dams that fail to meet 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. Of the 2000 dams in Texas, 269 sites require design and construction, 120 sites need repair, 209 sites need rehabilitation, and 112 dams no longer meet current safety standards. Status: Funding of \$3 million per year from 2003-2005 dropped to \$2.2 million in 2006, and \$1.7 million in 2007.
- ◆ **SUPPORT:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' FY2009 budget funding requests of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, Title IX, authorizing a National Levee Safety Program. Provide funding for the USACE to conduct a survey of levees throughout the United States, including Texas, to allow the inventory and inspection of levees, on a cost-shared basis.

