

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

STATE CAPITOL
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
95814

June 15, 2017

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor
State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: \$100 million request for levee repairs due to Oroville Dam Spillway failure

Dear Governor Brown:

The failure of the spillway at Oroville Dam has left the people of our region shaken. As a result of this catastrophe, people feel unsafe in large part due to the deteriorating water system infrastructure.

In the aftermath of the recent spring storms, levees throughout the region saw significant damage. Having toured the Feather River and personally witnessed the long stretches of crumbled river banks and levees as a result of the drastically fluctuating water releases from the Oroville Dam, we can attest to the critical need for \$100 million in additional funding for serious infrastructure repairs for flood control.

The heavy rainfall received this year and the severe damage to the Oroville Dam spillways have caused substantial destruction to flood control structures, which must be fixed to protect our citizens and their property. A break in any of these critical repair sites along the levee system have the potential to devastate the region and require hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of emergency repairs. In addition, the state bears liability for avoidable catastrophic damage as a result of levee repairs (see *Paterno v. State of California*).

The \$111 million funding currently placed in the budget is insufficient, one-time money for only those projects that are specified in Proposition 1, a proposition passed before the Oroville Dam Spillway failure. Below is the breakdown of current funding:

\$111 million—The 2017-18 conference report includes \$111 million to improve flood control infrastructure throughout the state, including:


- \$35 million to improve Delta levees and emergency response
- \$67 million for flood control projects in the Central Valley, including multi-benefit projects that include habitat restoration improvements
- \$9 million for Coastal flood projects

This funding is not for the critical levee repairs that resulted from the recent storms and the Oroville Dam Spillway failure. The current funding, touted by your staff, is woefully inadequate. Moreover, the \$50 million re-purposed from last year has largely already been accounted for.


California's levees protect millions of lives, farmland and wildlife habitat. With the fall rainy season only a few months away, Northern California desperately needs an additional \$100 million in funding to avert further damage to the state's levees.

We respectfully ask you to directly intervene and fund the bi-partisan request of \$100 million in this year's budget to shore up our levees.

Respectfully



JIM NIELSEN
Senator, 4th District



JAMES GALLAGHER
Assemblymember, 3rd District