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Officials break ground on \$1.95 Billion flood risk reduction project

STOCKTON, California – Earlier today, federal, state, and local leaders broke ground on what will ultimately become the largest-ever state and federal public safety infrastructure investment in Stockton's history. In a lineup led by Congressman Josh Harder, speakers heralded the construction start of the \$1.95 billion Lower San Joaquin River Project, a multi-year effort to reduce flood risk for vulnerable areas in north and central Stockton.

According to officials, levees along Stockton's San Joaquin River, San Joaquin Delta front, and Calaveras River need improvements to meet state and federal standards and protect more than 122,000 residents from the dual threat of riverine flooding and sea level rise. The project also aims to protect approximately \$28.7 billion in property.

"Year after year, Valley families are constantly dealing with flood threats and worrying about if floodwater is going to pour into their living rooms," said Representative Harder. "We need to get our aging levees fixed faster, starting with projects like these that will upgrade our flood control infrastructure and reduce flood risk. But we can't stop there — we need to cut red tape slowing down repairs and putting families and homes at risk and ensure that local communities don't get left with the bill. I'll continue working with our partners in the Valley and Washington to protect families from catastrophic flooding."

The project is being implemented under a partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the California Central Valley Flood Protection Board, the California Department of Water Resources, and the San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency. Ninety percent of project costs are expected to be paid by state and federal agencies.

Due to its large scope, the project will be constructed in phases, beginning with approximately 1.1 miles of critically deficient levee along Tenmile Slough. Construction crews will install a seepage cutoff wall and erosion protection along this levee reach, among other improvements. Work will be completed in fall 2026.

"Protecting the people and economy of San Joaquin County from the devastation of extreme flooding is enormously important. Projects like this pay for themselves many times over as shifts between extreme wet and dry conditions become more common. California is committed to making these investments in flood infrastructure across the state to adapt to our new climate reality," said DWR Director Karla Nemeth.

The Lower San Joaquin River Project will upgrade nearly 24 miles of levee and include a closure structure. It will also implement non-structural measures such as emergency evacuation planning. Preliminary design and geotechnical work on other phases are underway. The next phase slated for construction is Shima Tract in north Stockton. The entire project is scheduled for completion in 2039.

“Beyond necessary public safety, this project is a long-term investment in the economic viability of our community,” said San Joaquin County Supervisor and SJAFCA Board Chair Paul Canepa. “We have a responsibility to protect residents, but also thousands of businesses large and small that comprise the economic backbone of our community.”

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SJAFCA is a joint powers authority of the cities of Stockton, Lathrop and Manteca, San Joaquin County, and San Joaquin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. Its mission is to reduce and manage flood risk within most of San Joaquin County. www.sjafca.org