

FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT Prepared for Winter Storms?

SUMMARY

The Flood Control and Water Conservation District, part of the County Public Works Department, manages the waterways and storage basins in Santa Barbara County. The District deals with emergencies on a regular basis, as winter rains often generate violent flows in the County's creeks and rivers. The Grand Jury investigated the District's flood control program to assess its effectiveness in protecting the County from the effects of these flows.

The Santa Maria levee, which protects the City of Santa Maria and the greater Santa Maria Valley from storm waters in the Santa Maria River, had a major failure in 1998 and is at risk of failing again. Although the District is working proactively to minimize this risk through interim measures, an engineering study indicates that a permanent reinforcement of the levee will cost over \$38 million.

Recommendation 1: Now that a comprehensive engineering study of the Santa Maria Levee is available, the funding to reinforce the levee should be secured and applied to the solutions in the study report.

Public Works Response: The Public Works Department is already implementing this recommendation. Currently, we are seeking funding in the Federal Budget for the Corps of Engineers to prepare a feasibility report on the Levee (estimated cost \$1.5 Million) which is required to secure Federal construction money of a much larger amount.

City Response: ... The City is currently seeking funding [indicated above] ... the City has also been engaging the State of California for funding with the State actively investigating its ability to fund levee improvements.

Board of Supervisors: The Board agrees with this recommendation and is pursuing federal and State funding through our legislators.

Concurrently, staff has engaged the State of California for funding as well. The State is actively investigating its ability to fund levee improvements. Although the State's interest is clearly in the Sacramento area, staff continues to push for funding for Santa Maria as well.

Recommendation 2: *The Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation District should continue to address the silting issue at Twitchell Dam.*

Public Works Response: The Public Works Department has no current direct responsibility for this recommendation ...

Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation District Response: The District agrees . . . silt accumulation ... is an on-going problem... [and] is proportionate to the upstream activity.