Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2006

The Honorable David Hobson, Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy & Water Development
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hobson and Ranking Member Visclosky:

Last year, we wrote to you in the wake of Hurricane Katrina requesting your support for federal funds for key flood control and levee improvement projects in our state. As we said then, flood related events account for 90 percent of all natural disasters in California and we must act now to address areas in the state with the greatest potential threat of catastrophic flooding.

One of those areas, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta), requires immediate attention to ensure the reliability of California's water supply, the protection of the state's over 7 million acres of irrigable farm land, and the preservation of the West Coast's largest estuary. Made up of an extensive network of earthen levees, the Delta provides over 23 million Californians with a clean and reliable source of drinking water. Unfortunately, scientists have predicted that a moderate sized earthquake could cause massive failure of these levees. Such a failure would have a dramatic and devastating effect on the state's economy.

As we said last year, levee maintenance and upgrading is expected to cost over $2 billion over the next decade. In the past, funding has lagged for the Delta levee projects, but it is an investment that cannot be shortchanged. The federal authorization of CALFED in 2004 authorized $90 million for levee improvements in the Delta, including reconstruction of Delta levees; additional stability enhancement for levees of particular importance; and the development of both bets management practices and an Emergency Management and Response Plan.

In order to assess short term needs, the CALFED legislation also required the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to submit to Congress a report outlining levee stability reconstruction projects and priorities in the Delta. Because last year's Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act provided $500,000 for the "180-Day" Report, as part of the Army Corps' CALFED Levee System Integrity Program, the Army Corps is set to deliver their report to Congress on May 16, 2006.

It is anticipated that this report will show a massive need for levee improvement in the Delta and will also clearly define the importance of the ongoing Delta Risk Management Strategy Study, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Islands and Levees Feasibility Study, and the Delta Levee Emergency Management & Response Plan. Now is not the time to stop federal investment in the Delta. **To the contrary, it is time make federal investment in the Delta a yearly priority.**

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

We respectfully request, that $6 million be provided in the FY2007 Energy and Water Development Appropriations legislation for the U.S. Army Corps' CALFED Levee System Integrity Program and $2 million be provide for the Corps' Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Islands and Levees Feasibility Study. This type of investment will ensure that the work being done now can continue and immediate needs in the Delta will be addressed.

There is great momentum in our state for dramatically improving the integrity of the Delta. Today, the state has undertaken a Delta Vision study to create a 100-Year Delta Vision that will, in a strategic manner, outline the investments needed in the Delta. Additionally, the Governor and State Legislature are negotiating the terms of a multi-billion dollar bond initiative which will contain billions of dollars for in Delta improvements.

Now is the time for the CALFED state-federal partnership to be at its height. We hope that you understand the grave importance of this request and thank you in advance for your consideration. We look forward to working with you both to address these crucial disaster prevention measures.

Sincerely,

ELLEN O. TAUSCHER
Member of Congress

GEORGE MILLER
Member of Congress

MIKE HONDA
Member of Congress

DENNIS CARDOZA
Member of Congress

HENRY WAXMAN
Member of Congress

JANE HARMAN
Member of Congress

BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

PETE STARK
Member of Congress