

**Amendment 1090 - Requires that the residents of Sacramento be protected from the threat of floods before federal funds are spent to add sand to beaches in San Diego.**

S.1248, the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, includes a provision authorizing \$8.5 million to add sand to Imperial Beach in Southern California. This is a process referred to as “beach nourishment.” The bill also authorizes federal funding for periodic beach nourishment every 10 years for a period of 50 years for an estimated cost of \$20,550,000 in federal funds.

While adding sand to beaches may provide a temporary fix for erosion and make beaches more spacious, such projects are not essential and do not merit siphoning federal funds away from higher priority Corps projects, such as protecting the thousands of residents living in the Sacramento Valley who are at risk of catastrophic flooding.

The White House Statement of Administration Policy on this bill urges eliminating funding for beach nourishment.<sup>1</sup>

This amendment does not prohibit funding for the Imperial Beach project, but rather delays such funding until Sacramento residents are provided adequate flood protection.

This amendment is about setting priorities and ensuring that critical needs are fully addressed before federal dollars are spent on other less essential projects.

**At the Urging of California’s Elected Leaders, Congress Singled Out the Sacramento Flood Threat as an Emergency Last Year**

Last year following the devastating impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Congress approved \$37 million for a number of Sacramento levee and flood control projects as part of an emergency

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<sup>1</sup> Terry Kivlan. “White House Wants Projects Removed From WRDA Bill,” CongressDailyPM, May 11, 2007.

appropriations bill. Of this amount, \$23.3 million was approved specifically for the Sacramento River Bank Protection.

An amendment to the Fiscal Year 2006 emergency supplemental appropriations bill would have stricken the initial recommendation of \$11.3 million in federal funding for this project because of concerns regarding the appropriateness of the “emergency spending” designation and previous project mismanagement.

During the floor debate, Senators Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer made the case for why this emergency funding was needed for a project despite the fact that it had been ongoing for 46 years with millions of dollars in cost overruns and poor accountability measures.

Senator Boxer argued that this amendment would have put “the food supply for the entire nation ... at stake,” and to do so was “reckless” and “penny wise and pound foolish.”

She noted: “California has the world’s fifth largest economy, and we are quibbling over \$11 million that the Corps says it needs to fix up these riverbanks. How outrageous, how shortsighted, how foolish... How would we feel if we did something on this Senate floor today that turned our backs on this issue and then we had a tragedy?... I don’t know where the heart is, where the soul is. I don’t know where the common sense is.”<sup>2</sup>

Senator Feinstein also noted, “The bottom line is that human life and property hangs in the balance based on the sustainability of these levees.”<sup>3</sup>

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger also sent a letter urging the amendment be withdrawn, stating, “These funds are for identified improvements that can be completed this fiscal year in federally authorized flood control projects.”<sup>4</sup>

The amendment was withdrawn and the emergency funding was appropriated.

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<sup>2</sup> Congressional Record, May 2, 2006

<sup>3</sup> Senator Feinstein Press Release, May 3, 2006, <http://feinstein.senate.gov/06releases/r-levee-coburn.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Governor Schwarzenegger correspondence to Senator Tom Coburn, May 2, 2006

## **Sacramento Remains Vulnerable to Flood Threats**

Sacramento is part of a natural floodplain and uses levees and sophisticated drainage systems to protect the City from the waters of the American and Sacramento Rivers and local creeks and streams.

Sacramento experienced record floods in 1964, 1986 and again in 1997.

According to the city's Department of Utilities, Sacramento still has a 100 year level of flood protection, meaning that within a 100 year time period it is likely a major flood will occur that the current flood protection infrastructure could not withstand.<sup>5</sup>

According to the Corps, Sacramento's flood protection actually varies between an 85 and a 100 year level of flood protection.

Sacramento continues to have the lowest flood protection level of any major city. Currently, Sacramento still has an 85 year level of flood protection, meaning that within an 85 year time period it is likely a major flood will occur.

In comparison, New Orleans and Omaha have a 250 year level of flood protection and other major cities at risk for catastrophic flooding like Tacoma, St. Louis, Dallas and Kansas City enjoy at least a 500-year flood protection.<sup>6</sup>

Corps projects in the area include the Sacramento River Bank Protection, the American River Common Features, the Folsom Modification, the Folsom Dam Raise, and the South Sacramento County Streams.<sup>7</sup> Only once these projects are complete will Sacramento have a 200-year flood protection level.

According to the *Sacramento Business Journal*, the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency estimates it will cost \$2.7 billion to provide 200-

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cityofsacramento.org/utilities/flood/floodready.html>

<sup>6</sup> <http://doolittle.house.gov/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=58548>

<sup>7</sup> E-mail from COE Liaison, May 8, 2007.

year flood protection through levee improvements and Folsom Dam upgrades. \$2.4 billion is expected to come from federal and state sources. Additionally, preliminary estimates put the cost of statewide flood-control improvements for California at \$12 billion.<sup>8</sup>

As Senators Feinstein and Boxer pointed out, a flood would have devastating consequences totaling more than \$11 billion in property damages and displacing over 200,000 residents for an average of 10 months according to a 2005 state Water Resources Department analysis.

U.S. Representative Doris Matsui recently stated that, "Sacramento flood protection is an on-going process" and that the city still "faces a high risk of catastrophic flooding."<sup>9</sup>

U.S. Representative John Doolittle also notes that a recent Bureau of Reclamation report maintains that the Sacramento "region is faced with twice the risk and half the protection from catastrophic flooding as New Orleans had been prior to Katrina."<sup>10</sup>

If securing Sacramento from potential floods is as urgent a priority as California's elected leaders argue, it would be misguided to siphon away resources that could be used to complete the project and finally secure Sacramento to instead pay for replenishing of sand on southern California beaches.

### **Imperial Beach Struggles with Erosion of Beach Sand**

About 500 miles south of Sacramento is the City of Imperial Beach. Imperial Beach is flanked by the Pacific Ocean and South San Diego Bay and the city's website brags that "our town is nestled between miles of uncrowded beaches, big surf and unparalleled open space and wetlands teeming with wildlife.

The website states that "Over the past few years a true coastal renaissance has taken hold along Seacoast Drive and Old Palm

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<sup>8</sup> "Leveraging Levees," Sacramento Business Journal, February 19, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> <http://matsui.house.gov/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://doolittle.house.gov/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=58548>

Avenue. The Port of San Diego and the City of Imperial Beach embarked on the most significant set of oceanfront improvements in the town's history with the Pier Plaza redevelopment.”<sup>11</sup>

California's Imperial Beach is known for its world famous Annual Sandcastle Competition, which drew more than 350,000 people last year.

The Imperial Beach Sandcastle Competition, in fact, is the largest sandcastle building competition in the United States.<sup>12</sup> This festival encompasses a full weekend including a street festival, live music and entertainment. Sand carving teams from throughout the U.S. compete for more than \$21,000 in cash prizes.<sup>13</sup>

Erosion, however, has been a constant nuisance for business and home owners at the beach for over 50 years.<sup>14</sup>

The City of Imperial Beach's "General Plan & Coastal Plan" notes:

“Since the mid-1800's, sand migration from the Tijuana river delta and the seacliffs at Playas de Tijuana, along with periodic City beach replenishment projects (which took place from 1941 to 1985) have been the primary source of new beach sand in Imperial Beach. However, in more recent years, the Mexican Government has added to the beach erosion problem by building dams on the Tijuana River Basin, which have trapped approximately 660,000 yards of sand per year. This is sand that normally would have reached the beach if not entrapped by these dams. Because of this, the beach has had to undergo beach replenishment from dredging and an artificial replenishment of the beach. ... The width of the City's beach has varied greatly over the years with beach erosion

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<sup>11</sup> City of Imperial Beach, California website, <http://www.ci.imperial-beach.ca.us/>

<sup>12</sup> Photos of the Sandcastle Competition in Imperial Beach are available at <http://www.wilmerandladyanne.com/sandcastles.htm>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.aroundandaboutsandiego.com/imperialbeach.html>

<sup>14</sup> The eScholarship Editions project at the California Digital Library, <http://content.cdlib.org/xtf/view?docId=ft0h4nb01z&chunk.id=d0e5425&toc.depth=1&toc.id=d0e5273&brand=eschol>

and sand loss being particularly evident during the winter storm season.”<sup>15</sup>

In 1959, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began efforts to control Imperial Beach erosion by creating artificial structures known as “groins” intended to catch and retain sand. According to the city, “The ineffectiveness of” the Corps initial efforts “eventually necessitated further investigations and the development of a new plan.”

The Corps of Engineers studied several alternative solutions including fixing the groins system, periodic beach nourishment, and offshore breakwaters.

In 1978, the recommended plan was to construct a 5,000-foot offshore-submerged breakwater, extend one of the existing groins, and construct a new groin approximately 600 feet long. In 1985, construction of the breakwater was to start but was halted when courts determined that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) did not address all the relevant issues. A revised EIS was never adopted.

During this period, private property owners initiated their own shoreline protection arrangements.

In the 1990s, the City adopted a "Shoreline Preservation Strategy" to set goals to manage the City's shoreline in a way which enhances the shoreline environment while also providing recreational opportunities and property protection.”

So after 50 years and millions of dollars, the beach erosion problem faced by Imperial Beach—created in part by manmade dams—continues. Efforts to solve the problem are hindered by environmental laws and decades of ineffective interventions.

As a result, beach goes and local businesses are dependent upon sand being deposited to maintain the beach.

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<sup>15</sup> The City of Imperial Beach General Plan & Coastal Plan, <http://coib.govoffice2.com/vertical/Sites/{6283CA4C-E2BD-4DFA-A7F7-8D4ECD543E0F}/uploads/{287DE849-4759-4040-B249-581809C088D8}.PDF>

## **Imperial Beach Sand Maintenance Is a Costly, Controversial, and Largely Unsuccessful Project That Encourages Risky Development Along Shorelines at Taxpayer Expense**

Because of the retreating shoreline, the Corps believes, “If no action is taken at the City of Imperial Beach, its properties and structures will be increasingly susceptible to damages caused by erosion (including loss of land and of properties), inundation, and wave attack.”<sup>16</sup>

Beach nourishment, the placement of adding sand to a beach, is the current technique being used to maintain a sandy shoreline.

This technique is acknowledged as a costly temporary solution at best, that has encouraged risky development and construction along shorelines at federal taxpayer expense.<sup>17</sup>

According to Professor Orrin H. Pilkey, Director of the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines at Duke University, “The most dramatic example of ill-advised government action is provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has been steadily ‘nourishing’ the beaches of various politically connected sea coast communities that are concerned about erosion of their shores.”<sup>18</sup>

WiLDCOAST, an Imperial Beach organization that seeks to protect and preserve coastal ecosystems and wildlife, has endorsed this amendment.

WiLDCOAST Executive Director Serge Dedina notes that “WiLDCOAST represents the interests of Imperial Beach taxpayers who are solidly opposed to any public expenditures on beach replenishment projects in Imperial Beach. We have been informed by City of Imperial Beach staff that federally funded beach sand projects are designed to ‘enhance private property.’

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<sup>16</sup>[http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/cms/index.php/files/projects/samp/index.php?Itemid=54&id=100&option=com\\_content&task=view](http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/cms/index.php/files/projects/samp/index.php?Itemid=54&id=100&option=com_content&task=view)

<sup>17</sup> Orrin H. Pilkey. “Army Engineers Hit the Beaches,” Washington Post, June 17, 2001.

<sup>18</sup> Orrin H. Pilkey. “Army Engineers Hit the Beaches,” Washington Post, June 17, 2001.

“Our Beach Sand Stakeholder Advisory Group is formed of local Imperial Beach business owners and coastal engineering technical experts who all agree that the effort to have U.S. Taxpayers fund Imperial Beach sand replenishment is an absolute waste of scarce federal dollars. It has been scientifically proven that millions of dollars of sand that would be dumped on the beach of Imperial Beach would wash away in a single winter storm.”<sup>19</sup>

During Bill Clinton’s presidency, the Office of Management and Budget saw the need for states to take a greater burden in financing beach nourishment and proposed eliminating all funding for new nourishment projects and studies, and proposed reducing the federal share of existing projects to 35 percent.<sup>20</sup>

Questions regarding the efficacy, the fairness of the cost-sharing structure, and even the potential environmental impacts of beach nourishment make this earmark less of a federal priority.

### **Beach “Nourishment” Puts Communities and Businesses at Increased Risk for Flood Damage**

Imperial Beach is not at risk for severe life-threatening flooding like Sacramento is.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), there has only been one significant flooding of Imperial Beach. The flood occurred in February 1988 and resulted in 50 homes being flooded and \$500,000 in damages.<sup>21</sup>

The total damages of this flood dwarf the \$8.5 million in federal funding being proposed for Imperial Beach nourishment.

Some claim that beach “nourishment” is needed to protect communities and businesses from floods. The argument is that as

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<sup>19</sup> Correspondence from WiLDCOAST Executive Director Serge Dedina to Senator Tom Coburn, May 14, 2007.

<sup>20</sup> “Whose Beaches, Whose Burdens? At \$60 Million a Mile, Rebuilding New Jersey’s Shore Stirs Debate on Access, Effectiveness,” Washington Post, April 20, 1999.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/sgx/research/Guide/weatherhistory.pdf>

the size of the beach decreases, there is less natural protection to keep the water away from businesses and communities.

The reality may be the reverse.

Beach “nourishment” may actually increase the potential damage toll of floods.

Professor Pilkey of Duke University notes that “The density of development behind an artificially rebuilt beach often increases dramatically. High rises, hotels and condos replace beach cottages, leaving more buildings than ever dangerously positioned when the next big flood or storm comes.”

Professor Pilkey notes that beach nourishment must be redone, often at three- to five-year intervals and at considerable cost, perpetually.

“A generation from now, we will likely reach a point at which the great lengths of nourished shoreline and the rapid loss and high costs of the artificial beaches will be unacceptable to taxpayers,” Professor Pilkey predicts.

He suggests that “When nationwide beach nourishment is no longer feasible, one alternative will be to demolish buildings or move them elsewhere. But the expensive rows of high-rises that have been encouraged by beach nourishment may make this politically impossible. What most likely will happen instead is that the beachfront communities will protect themselves with seawalls, a coastal engineering approach that is now illegal in six states. ... Walls or no walls, massive destruction of beachfront property would occur in future large storms.”

Professor Pilkey concludes that “Americans should be studying and debating the future of our shorelines. The Corps shouldn't be allowed to continue ‘reengineering’ our beaches without the nation's taking a long and hard look into the future.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Orrin H. Pilkey. “Army Engineers Hit the Beaches,” Washington Post, June 17, 2001.

## **The Federal Government Has Spent About \$600 Million for Beach Maintenance Programs Over the Past Five Years**

Professor Pilkey's prediction about the rising cost of maintaining artificial beaches, made in 2001, were accurate.

In 1996, the federal government spent \$47 million on beach maintenance in Fiscal Year 1996. This amount more than doubled over the next decade to \$112 million in Fiscal Year 2005.

For the five years beginning with fiscal year 2001, the federal government spent approximately \$600 million on beach and shoreline preservation.<sup>23</sup>

In the period beginning with fiscal year 1995 and ending in 2005, California received over \$56.8 million in federal beach assistance.<sup>24</sup>

The Corps, in fact, has spent \$4,101,828 on the Imperial Beach project through Fiscal year 2006.<sup>25</sup>

## **Imperial Beach Hired a Washington, DC Lobbyist to Obtain Additional Federal Funds**

To secure Congressional funding for this project, the City of Imperial Beach hired a Washington, DC-based lobbyist, Marlowe and Company, in March 2002.

According to a February 15, 2006 City staff report, "Imperial Beach retained Marlowe & Company to assist the City in obtaining the Federal funding necessary for [Army Corps of Engineers] Imperial Beach-Silver Strand Sand Project." The memo notes that "Marlowe & Company has consistently assisted the City of Imperial Beach with these efforts over the past three years."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Marlowe & Company. "Federal Assistance for Beach and Shoreline Restoration," Slide 2, 2005; [http://www.marloweco.com/files/Federal\\_Assistance\\_for\\_Restoration\\_REVISE.pdf](http://www.marloweco.com/files/Federal_Assistance_for_Restoration_REVISE.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Slide 3

<sup>25</sup> E-mail from Corps of Engineers to staff of Senator Coburn, May 10, 2007.

<sup>26</sup> Gary Brown, City Manager. "Staff Report City of Imperial Beach, Adoption of Resolution No. 2006-6286 Authorizing a Professional Services Contract for Sand Lobbyists," February 15, 2006;

The report states:

“Since retaining their services, Marlowe & Company has been instrumental in securing approximately \$1,400,000 in Federal funding for this project. Additionally, Marlowe & Company played a key role in the adoption of State Senate Bill (SB) 976 which shifted \$4 .2 million of State Funding for our local share of the project's construction into the Public Beach Restoration Fund thereby assuring a more favorable cost-sharing requirement for these funds. A contract has been executed with the State for these funds. Currently, Marlowe & Company continues to push for adoption of a Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) Bill to authorize construction of the project and continues to lobby Congress on our behalf for important legislation affecting our project.

“Based upon past efforts and a proven track record for such projects, City staff has elected once again to retain Marlowe & Company to pursue funding for the City's important sand replenishment efforts. Their firm is unique among Washington lobbying firms in that they specialize in assisting clients in the receipt of federal funding for beach nourishment projects. ...

“Recognizing that this project is vital to the City, staff feels that it is important to continue on with our lobbying efforts. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful last year in obtaining funding to support continuation of the [pre-construction, engineering and design] for the project. ...

“As stipulated in the contract, Marlowe & Company will provide the following services for the City of Imperial Beach:

- Assist the City of Imperial Beach obtain the Federal funding it needs for its beach project and the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) authorization it needs to begin construction on the project

- Assist the City in its dealings with the Army Corps of Engineers
- Prepare a Congressional Appropriations and Authorizations Schedule and will work with elected officials and the Corps of Engineers District Office to prepare funding requests for our project
- Work with the Los Angeles District of the ACOE to formulate a request for an authorization in the Water Resources Development Act
- Meet with our congressional delegation and with key congressional committee staff aides to pursue funding for our project.
- If any representatives of the City of Imperial Beach are able go to Washington, DC to visit key congressional offices, Marlowe & Company will prepare talking points and accompany them, in addition to arranging the appointments and providing other logistical support.
- Maintain continual telephone and e-mail contact with City staff (and/or anyone we select), and provide periodic written reports on all activities.
- Constantly monitor all relevant congressional developments in order to take advantage of any reasonable opportunity to secure the appropriation. ...

“Contractual terms of the agreement between the City of Imperial Beach and Marlowe & Company will be retroactive to January 1, 2005. The services described will be provided for \$34000 retroactive from January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006 (payable in equal monthly installments) plus necessary out-of-pocket expenses for such items as long distance calls, local transportation, messenger and air courier services, etc. not to exceed \$350 per month. ...

“A total of \$40,200.00 will be budgeted for this contract.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Gary Brown, City Manager. “Staff Report City of Imperial Beach, Adoption of Resolution No. 2006-6286 Authorizing a Professional Services Contract for Sand Lobbyists,” February 15, 2006; <http://www.ci.imperial-beach.ca.us/vertical/Sites/%7B6283CA4C-E2BD-4DFA-A7F7-8D4ECD543E0F%7D/uploads/%7B0C3A6F07-98B1-405D-9AD9-B754B333DD92%7D.PDF>

A resolution was passed, approved and adopted by the City Council of the City of Imperial Beach on February 15, 2006 to retain Marlowe & Company as the city's Washington, DC lobbyist.

[Howard Marlowe of Marlowe & Company is a political campaign contributor to Senator Boxer, the current chair of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.]

According to a recent article in the Capitol Hill newspaper, *The Hill*:

"‘We know beaches,’ said Marlowe, a native New Yorker who now says he can size up whether a beach is healthy or not with just a glance.

"Unlike the beaches themselves, the beach-renourishment business shows no sign of eroding – to the chagrin of spending-watchdog groups.

"Marlowe & Co. – which began in 1984 as a one-man shop that lobbied for basic infrastructure needs of small to midsize cities – made more than \$700,000 last year representing more than 30 coastal communities clamoring to save a vital economic resource.

"The firm estimates that it has won more than \$100 million in federal money for beach projects so far.

"Spending millions on beaches destined to be washed away has struck both the Clinton and Bush administrations as not smart. But Congress keeps dumping millions on projects that the government could be paying for over the next 50 years.

"The House energy and water appropriations bill, for instance, would increase beach-renourishment projects in the Corps of Engineers’ 2005 budget by \$21 million – for a total of just under \$100 million. The Corps manages the beach accounts, which are the fastest growing part of its budget – although they account for just a fraction of the total (around 6 percent). Under the funding formula, the federal government pays 65 percent of the costs, with state and local entities picking up the rest.

"If you have a beach losing its sand, the budget increases that Congress typically provides are as welcome as rich retirees.

"The economy goes down the drain if we don't have a healthy, wide and accessible beach," said Greg Rudolph, the shore-protection manager for North Carolina's Carteret County, which has nearly 100 miles of shoreline to protect.

"The county hired Marlowe in 2001. For communities, the \$2,000-a-month fee can be a hard swallow. Marlowe said he spent a year courting Venice.

"But the fees can be a pittance compared to what can come in. Last year, Marlowe helped Carteret County win a \$3 million earmark for a dredging project and \$400,000 for an initial study of a shoreline-restoration project.

"He knows how to get the money and what to do with it after it's received by Corps," Rudolph said of Marlowe. ...

"Before getting into the beach business, Marlowe worked as an energy analyst and spent four years on the Hill in the early 1970s. He also served two terms as the president of the American League of Lobbyists.

"But it's the beach business where Marlowe has earned his reputation — although his firm still lobbies for other infrastructure earmarks and he and his wife prefer to vacation in the mountains.

"He founded the American Coastal Coalition, a group of coastal communities, and later merged it with the 75-year-old American Shore and Beach Preservation Association, which remains a client.

"He also was instrumental in forming the House Coastal Caucus, which has become a powerful legislative group.

"Like any good lobbyist, Marlowe is quick to give credit to the delegations he works with that actually secure the earmarks.

"We're extra staff for those members of Congress. We're extra staff for our clients who can't keep track of what is going on. We're extra staff for the [Corps],' he said.

"It doesn't hurt when you are looking for dollars, of course, that House Appropriations Committee Chairman C.W. "Bill" Young's (R) district includes miles of shoreline. Pinellas County, which encompasses Florida's 10th District, is among the top recipients of federal beach funds each year.

"According to an analysis by Taxpayers for Common Sense, a government-spending watchdog group, 14 beach projects in Florida got no funding in the budget submitted by President Bush but received \$18 million in the House spending measure.

"Lawmakers say they rely on Marlowe and his firm to help make the case to their colleagues with constituents lucky just to visit the beach once a year. ...

"To critics, beach lobbying is the epitome of government waste. The projects for which Marlowe is lobbying will wash away eventually, but taxpayers could be paying the bill for decades.

"For the most part, these projects aren't sustainable,' said Steve Ellis, a vice president for policy at Taxpayers for Common Sense. 'They are fighting a losing battle against Mother Nature. Erosion happens.'

"Ellis's group estimates that the 103 beach projects now authorized or under consideration could cost taxpayers more than \$10 billion. When the Corps funds a project, the federal government agrees to pay to renourish the beach for the next 50 years, although appropriators still would need to approve any future spending.

"Ellis told a House panel in March 2002 that the beach budget had ballooned by 60 percent in the previous three years, even though both Clinton and Bush targeted beach funding for cuts.

"Environmentalists say the beach money pays to

develop areas that should be left to wildlife. ...

"For Marlowe, whether a beach should get federal support comes down to this: 'Can Marlowe get out of his car, walk to the beach and enjoy himself for a day?'

"Critics of beach projects are 'trying to take away my beach,' he said. 'They are trying to take away public recreation.'" <sup>28</sup>

While the City of Imperial Beach has budgeted tens of thousands of dollars to hire a Washington, DC lobbying firm and to pay for cash prizes for sandcastle competitions, it expects the U.S. taxpayer to pay the price of maintaining sandy beaches.

Corps priorities should be determined based upon the merits of projects, not on the political connections of Washington, DC lobbyists.

### **In Addition to the Millions for Beach Sand, This Bill Is Loaded With Numerous Other Pork Projects for California**

The underlying bill includes 34 earmarks for California, more projects than any other state.

With 18 projects, Illinois is a distant second. Louisiana and New York both have 13 projects, Texas has 12, Vermont has 11, and every other state has 10 or fewer projects contained in this bill.

Other California projects listed in the underlying bill include a Los Angeles River Revitalization Study for \$25 million, over \$150 million for ecosystem restoration projects, regional sediment management in Fletcher Grove, and \$20 million for a cooperative agreement to manage and improve fisheries.

It is irresponsible for Congress to expand the list of projects for the Corps to undertake when essential programs are still not completed.

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<sup>28</sup> Jim Snyder. "Marlowe & Co.: 'We know beaches,' Howard Marlowe is K Street's man on the waterfront," The Hill, July 6, 2004; <http://www.calcoast.org/news/beach0040706a.html>

It is this lack of prioritization that puts cities at risk of flooding and has contributed to our staggering \$8.7 trillion national debt.

### **Congress Must Set Priorities: Protecting Thousands from Potential Life Threatening Flooding or Adding Sand to Beaches?**

The Corps of Engineers states \$28.905 million is still needed to complete the critical South Sacramento Streams project, \$191.148 million is needed for the Sacramento Bank project and \$665.5 million is still needed for American River Watershed projects. All of these projects were funded in last year's emergency appropriations bill.<sup>29</sup>

The \$8.5 million authorized by this bill to add sand to Imperial Beach threatens to delay completion of these potentially life saving projects by siphoning away resources.

How can Congress justify diverting funding, resources and the attention of the Corps to controversial beach development projects when the commitment to life-preserving flood protection projects has yet to be fulfilled?

Despite questions and controversies surrounding the merits of this beach earmark and the efficacy of beach nourishment, the greatest reason to pass this amendment is to ensure that those projects that are absolutely **critical** to the well-being of our country and our citizens are completed first.

Last year, the California delegation was unanimous in its view that federal funds for Sacramento levees and flood control projects were do-or-die federal priorities that warranted the emergency spending designation. Congress agreed to fund these projects and even increased the amount appropriated to the Sacramento River Bank Protection Program from \$11.3 million to \$23.3 million.

Yet the projects are not complete and the city of Sacramento and its residents remain at risk.

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<sup>29</sup> E-mail #2 from Corps of Engineers to staff of Senator Coburn, May 10, 2007.

With the threat of catastrophic flooding of the Sacramento valley still possible, Congress should resist the temptation to divert funds to pay for beach maintenance that may be essential for building spacious beaches and sandcastles, but not for protecting human lives.

# Setting Priorities:

**Protecting Sacramento from Floods, or...**



**Maintaining Sandy Southern California Beaches**



-----Original Message-----

From: Serge Dedina [mailto:sdedina@wildcoast.net]

Sent: Monday, May 14, 2007 3:25 PM

To: Foster, Roland (Coburn)

Cc: Treat, Brian (Coburn); steve@taxpayer.net

Subject: Imperial Beach Taxpayers Support Coburn Amendment to WRDA

To:

Senator Dr. Tom Coburn

United States Senate

From: Serge Dedina, Ph.D

Executive Director

WILD COAST

925 Seacoast Drive

Imperial Beach, California, 91932

www.wildcoast.net

May 14, 2007

Dear Senator Coburn,

Please accept this endorsement for your amendment to the WRDA that would require that residents of Sacramento be protected from the threat of floods by the completion of the Sacramento River Bank Protection Program before federal funds are spent to add sand to beaches in San Diego (Imperial Beach).

WILD COAST represents the interests of Imperial Beach taxpayers who are solidly opposed to any public expenditures on beach replenishment projects in Imperial Beach. We have been informed by City of Imperial Beach staff that federally funded beach sand projects are designed to "enhance private property."

Our Beach Sand Stakeholder Advisory Group is formed of local Imperial Beach business owners and coastal engineering technical experts who all agree that the effort to have U.S. Taxpayers fund Imperial Beach sand replenishment is an absolute waste of scarce federal dollars. It has been scientifically proven that millions of dollars of sand that would be dumped on the beach of Imperial Beach would wash away in a single winter storm.

We appreciate your support for stopping wasteful expenditures of scarce federal dollars through badly planned and flawed sand replenishment projects in Imperial Beach, California.

Sincerely,

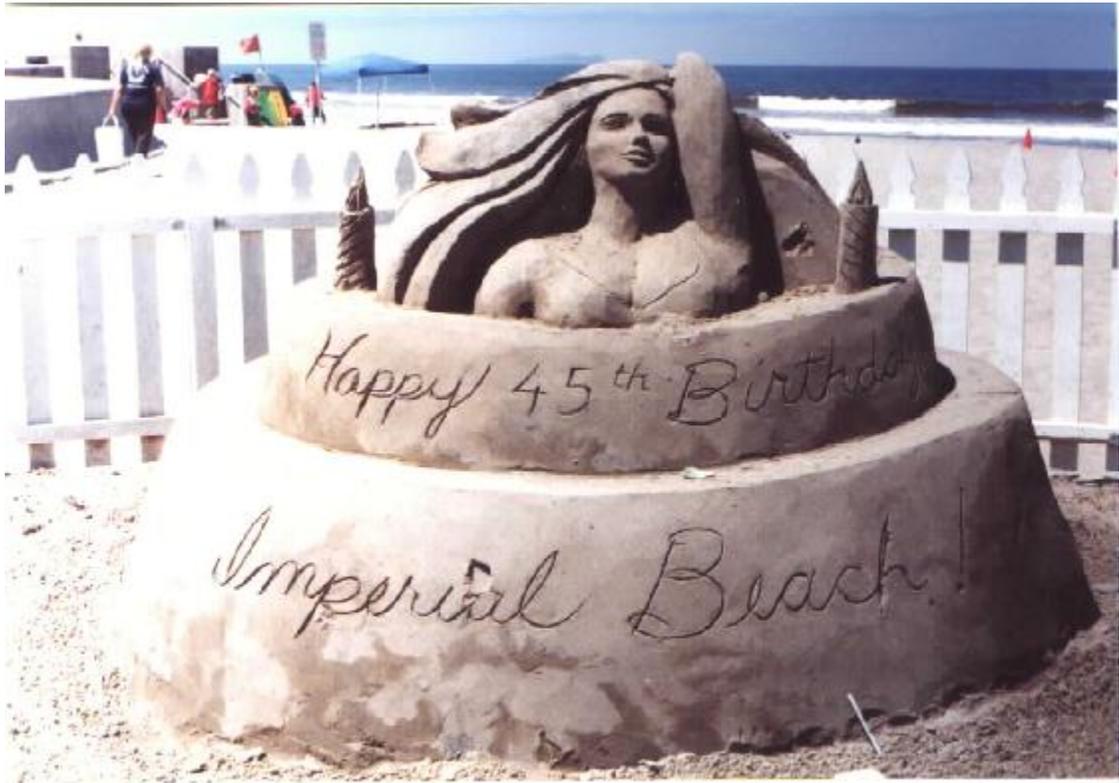
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Author of: Saving the Gray Whale





Source: <http://www.ib-chamber.biz/images/02-07-21-Misc-37.jpg>

<http://www.ib-chamber.biz/02-carvings.htm>



## **US Open Sandcastle Competition Weekend**

**July 19, 20 & 21, 2002**

### **Sand Carving Competition**



<http://www.ib-chamber.biz/images/02-07-21-Carvings-08.jpg>



<http://www.ib-chamber.biz/images/02-07-21-Carvings-04.jpg>



<http://www.ib-chamber.biz/images/02-07-21-Carvings-02.jpg>







## Sand Sculptures

Various artists  
from Sand World International,  
San Marcos, CA.  
Located Imperial Beach, CA,  
near I.B. Pier Plaza.  
Sand sculpture each Saturday, June-  
Sept.

Only in a place like Imperial Beach, California, can laughing dolphins, menacing dragons and other whimsical creatures emerge magically from the sun-drenched sands to delight the imagination of child and adult alike, and then just as mysteriously vanish into the relentless rolling combers that tirelessly sweep these golden shores.

Source: [http://www.portofsandiego.org/sandiego\\_publicart/sandsculptures.asp](http://www.portofsandiego.org/sandiego_publicart/sandsculptures.asp)

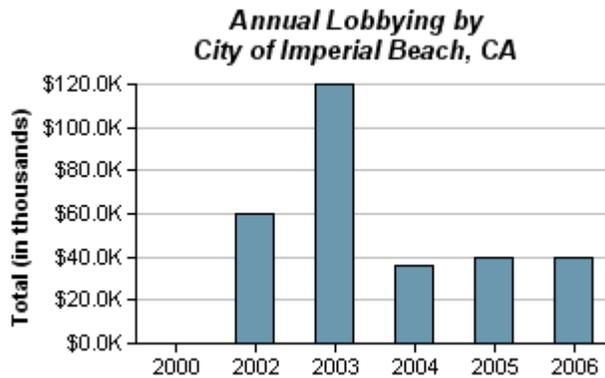




<http://www.opensecrets.org/lobbyists/clientsum.asp?txtname=City+of+Imperial+Beach%2C+CA&year=2006>

**CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH, CA  
Client Summary, 2006**

A special interest’s lobbying activity may go up or down over time, depending on how much attention the federal government is giving their issues. Particularly active clients often retain multiple lobbying firms, each with a team of lobbyists, to press their case for them.



**Total Lobbying**

**Expenditures: \$40,000**

Subtotal for Parent: \$40,000

**Lobbying Expenses Reported by Subsidiaries**

Firms Hired	Contract Income	Subsidiary (Lobbied For)
<a href="#">Marlowe &amp; Co</a>	\$40,000	-

City of Imperial Beach, CA does not include its subsidiaries' expenses in its self-filed report, so all expenditures are summed for Total Lobbying Expenditures

# The City of Imperial Beach General Plan & Coastal Plan

<http://coib.govoffice2.com/vertical/Sites/{6283CA4C-E2BD-4DFA-A7F7-8D4ECD543E0F}/uploads/{287DE849-4759-4040-B249-581809C088D8}.PDF>

## Shoreline Protection

The Imperial Beach shoreline is located within the Silver Strand Littoral Cell. The cell, which is a shore and sand accumulation area, extends from Playas de Tijuana, Baja, California Mexico, to the Zuniga Shores area near the ocean entrance to San Diego Bay. Since the mid-1800's, sand migration from the Tijuana river delta and the seacliffs at Playas de Tijuana, along with periodic City beach replenishment projects (which took place from 1941 to 1985) have been the primary source of new beach sand in Imperial Beach. However, in more recent years, the Mexican Government has added to the beach erosion problem by building dams on the Tijuana River Basin, which have trapped approximately 660,000 yards of sand per year. This is sand that normally would have reached the beach if not entrapped by these dams. Because of this, the beach has had to undergo beach replenishment from dredging and an artificial replenishment of the beach. Sand transport in this area of the Pacific Ocean is predominantly to the north, although some material moves to the south. The width of the City's beach has varied greatly over the years with beach erosion and sand loss being particularly evident during the winter storm season.

The Imperial Beach shoreline has undergone erosion for many years but the problem became acute during the winter of 1952-53 when wave erosion caused rapid shoreline retreat and property damage. Winter storms during the next several years continued to cause problems so that local and private interests were forced to install a stone revetment along the shoreline. In 1959, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers started construction of a system of five stone groins starting at the U.S. Naval Radio Station proceeding southward to a point approximately 400 feet south of Imperial Beach Boulevard. Four groins were eventually constructed, but the compartments between two groins were never completed which caused the destruction of the remaining groins. The ineffectiveness of these groins eventually necessitated further investigations and the development of a new plan.

The Corps of Engineers studied several alternative solutions including fixing the groins system, periodic beach nourishment, and offshore breakwaters. In 1978, the recommended plan was to construct a 5,000-foot offshore-submerged breakwater, extend one of the existing groins, and construct a new groin approximately 600 feet long. In 1985, construction of the breakwater was to start but was halted when courts determined that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) did not address all the relevant issues. A revised EIS was never adopted.

During this period, private property owners initiated their own shoreline protection arrangements. Older buildings developed along the shore without benefit of engineered structures have been previously damaged and will continue to be damaged as the beach recedes. Newer structures have been built with either or both stone revetments or vertical seawalls. These protection devices do not solve the beach replenishment issue and may ultimately fail as the beach slowly recedes.

In 1991, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) initiated steps to develop comprehensive countywide shoreline protection guidelines to manage the coastal sediment resource and protect coastal property from damage caused by breaking waves and marine flooding. The following goals were followed in preparing these guidelines:

- a. Develop a framework within which all commonly used tactics or methods can be considered.
- b. Develop a description of what specific tactics can and cannot be achieved.
- c. Develop a description of possible adverse effects and ways to reduce or eliminate those adverse effects.

Based on subsequent research SANDAG adopted the plan entitled "Shoreline Preservation Strategy for the San Diego Region" in 1993. The strategy has been accepted by the City of Imperial Beach and all other coastal cities in San Diego County. The goals and policies the City adopted with its acceptance of the SANDAG "Shoreline Preservation Strategy" are incorporated into the General Plan.

## **GOALS**

### **GOAL 15 SAFETY PROTECTION**

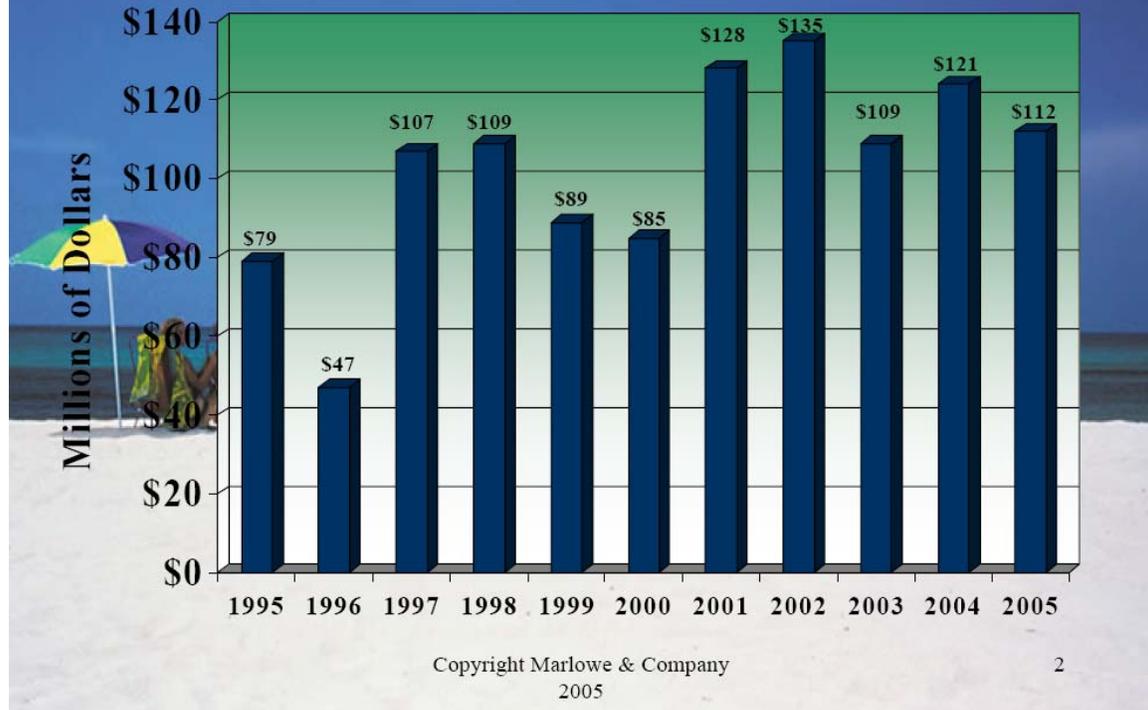
The City shall insure the protection of life and property from fire, flood, geologic and seismic related hazards.

### **GOAL 16 SHORELINE PROTECTION**

To manage the City's shoreline in a way which enhances the shoreline environment while also providing recreational opportunities and property protection.

Develop and carry out a cost-effective combination of shoreline management tactics that will have a positive impact on the regions economy and to develop a program to pay for the shoreline management strategy which equitably allocates costs throughout the region, and among local, State and Federal sources.

## How Much Federal Money is Available?



Letter from Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to Senator Tom Coburn, 5/02/2006

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR,

Sacramento, CA, May 2, 2006.

Hon. **TOM COBURN**,

*U.S. Senate, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.*

**DEAR SENATOR COBURN:** I am writing regarding your proposed amendment to the supplemental appropriations bill that seeks to block additional funds needed to repair California's Central Valley levee system.

As you may know, I am working very closely with Senator Feinstein and members of the California Congressional Delegation to secure additional federal funds to share in the costs of repairing California's Central Valley levee system. The need for funding and quick action could not be more urgent and that is why I have made it my top priority to work with our State Legislature to enact a major infrastructure bond initiative that would dedicate \$2.5 billion in state funds for urgently needed levee repairs along this federally authorized flood control system.

Our work to restore structural integrity to our levee system began over a year ago. We cannot wait for a disaster to strike and must use the lessons of Katrina and act now. Prior to Katrina, New Orleans had a 250-year level of flood protection. Sacramento has a 100-year level of flood protection. This is the lowest of any major city in the United States. It is only a matter of time before there is a significant levee breach or system failure. Such an event would flood valuable farmland that produces food for the entire nation. All of Sacramento and other Central Valley towns would be flooded. According to modeling done by the City and County of Sacramento, a single levee breach would cause flooding in many areas of the City with depths over 15 feet. A flood event of this magnitude would cut off Southern California's water supply. Such an event would also cause a major economic disruption in California and across the nation. Most troubling is without action, the lives of thousands of Californians are at risk.

As you know, Senators Feinstein and Boxer have worked very closely with Chairmen Cochran and Domenici to include funds in the pending supplemental appropriations bill for certain levee and flood control improvements in the Sacramento region. These funds are for identified improvements that can be completed this fiscal year in federally authorized flood control projects.

I support these funds and want to assure you that this is a necessary and urgent time for Congress to act. Moreover, any investment at this time decreases the chances that Congress will have to respond in the future with another far more expensive emergency funding bill to address a widespread flood disaster in California.

I ask that you recognize this as necessary emergency funding and support this as part of the supplemental appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I am joined in the Senate by my friend and colleague, Senator *Boxer*. We are joined at the hip in opposition to this. If there ever was a disaster waiting to happen, it is the levee situation in the State of California. I will take a few minutes to explain why.

Let me begin with this fact. We have a comparison of flood protection levels for major river cities. Sacramento is the only city in the Nation with 85-year protection. All comparable cities--New Orleans, 250-year flood protection;

Omaha, 250 years; Dallas, 500 years; Kansas City, St. Louis, Tacoma, 500 years.

The problem is, much of this area is 20 feet or more below the river, below the flood basins.

I stood in a home in Sacramento on Saturday. It was 20 feet below the level of the river. That is the problem. The sedimentary base of soils there is peat, and it is easily crumbled.

What you have are 2,600 miles of levees--some owned by the Federal Government, some by the State, some by private owners. These levees become eroded. And because of the heavy rain--the heaviest rainfall, I believe, that I can remember in California--there is deep concern about these levees.

Let me show you the specific area we are talking about. Shown in this picture is the Sacramento Pocket Area. The Governor, Mr. *Pombo* of the House, and a number of other public officials were right in this area--standing right here--a short time ago. We flew over the area. These are homes, all 20 feet below the river area. There are several places in this area that are priority needs for restoration immediately.

The Governor has declared a state of emergency. The Governor has advanced State moneys. The Governor has said this is of urgent priority. The fact of the matter is, at any time, places along this levee could go. You would flood 100,000 people in 20 feet of water. Many would be unable to evacuate. You would have real catastrophe.

The Army Corps of Engineers, through Colonel Light, the commander of the Sacramento District, came back. We sat down with Senator *Cochran*, the chairman of the committee, Senator *Byrd*, Senator *Domenici*, and Senator *Reid*. It was all explained that there is an emergency. Earthquake probabilities, for a major earthquake equal to 1906 in San Francisco or higher, are 62 percent by 2030. If there is an earthquake equal to what took place in California, the likelihood is that this entire area would be flooded and hundreds of thousands of people could be involved.

Now, this bill provides \$23 million in contingent emergency funding. This particular division is \$11.3 million. Funding would become available only if the President requests the money and certifies that it is an emergency.

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As I say, on February 24, the Governor proclaimed this state of emergency. He cited 24 critical erosion sites. That has been changed to 29 because of ongoing erosions due to the current high water level.

Today, there are 400 people from Sacramento who were worried enough about it that they have come to the Capitol to lobby for these funds. The money can become available as soon as the President signs the bill and certifies the contingent emergency.

The Sacramento River Bank Protection Project is the Federal project that repairs these critical erosion sites. This additional funding will ensure that these sites are repaired in this construction season. Both the State, Senator *Boxer*, and I have looked very carefully: Is this money that could be used this fiscal year, before the end of September, on these sites? The answer is clearly, yes.

Today, President Bush announced he is expediting environmental review to allow construction work on the sites to proceed as quickly as possible.

So President Bush, Governor Schwarzenegger, and the Senate Appropriations Committee all recognize how important it is to repair the weakened levees along the Sacramento River.

Mr. President, 174 actively eroding sites on levee banks have been identified. The highest priority is 29 of these sites. That is what we are trying to repair as soon as possible to prevent subdivisions, such as this one shown in this picture, from being inundated with 20 feet of water.

I stood there. I saw it. I saw the difference in height. And that is a phenomenon on the levee. Some might say housing should have never been built there, but the fact is it was.

The critical sites we are asking money for stretch along 137 miles of the Sacramento River. They include areas of the river in the city of Sacramento, and that is this pocket area.

Now, these homes sit virtually in the shadow of the levee system, and modeling by Sacramento show that a breached levee would result in the area flooding to depths of 17 to 20 feet.

This area is called the "Pocket" because the homes sit in a pocket by a broad curve in the river.

Mr. President, 33,000 homes are here; 100,000 people live right here. Colonel Light, the commander of the Sacramento District of the Corps, has indicated to me, to Senator *Cochran*, to Senator *Byrd*, to Senator *Domenici*, to Senator *Reid*, that this money can be utilized by the Corps now. The reason they cannot transfer funds is because prior legislation of this body and the other body prohibits the transfer of funds above a certain amount in a timely and

effective manner.

The repairs consist largely of armoring the levees with rock. Of the 29 sites, repairs for 5 have been designed already, and the remainder will be designed in the next few months.

I do not need to tell you what a major flood would do. I do not need to tell you that these rivers are at historic highs right now. And it is as the river begins to decline that they worry most because the fear is the water subsiding will take with it portions of this levee.

The work has to be done.

It is kind of interesting. I often tell a story of when I was mayor, and the director of Public Works came to me and said: Madam Mayor, I think if there was an earthquake, the rim of Candlestick Park would come down. And I thought: What is the likelihood of that? I said: How much does it cost? He told me. And then I thought: I now know this. I have an obligation to do something about it. We found the money. We repaired the rim. And who would have thought that the Giants would have been in the second game of the World Series, at 5 o'clock, when the Loma Prieta earthquake hit, and the rim of Candlestick Park--had it come down--would have killed 20,000 people sitting directly below it.

I am telling you that these levee banks could breach. I am telling you that 100,000 people and 33,000 homes--as shown right here--could lose their lives and their homes. And the evacuation difficulty is enormous.

It seems to me that once we know this as public officials, we have an absolute obligation to do something about it.

The Appropriations Committee has agreed. The money can be used this fiscal year. And both my colleague and I believe very strongly we should vote "no" on this amendment.

I would like to yield the floor to my colleague. I know she is here somewhere.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I certainly will.

Mr. COBURN. When you were changing Candlestick Park, you did not borrow money from future generations of Americans to do that? You found it within the budget? I believe that is correct; is it not?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Well, it is interesting. City and county budgets have to be balanced. The only budgets that do not have to be balanced are the State budget, at least in California, and the Federal budget. But we had to balance our budget, so, yes, I did have to find the money by taking it from other places. That is true.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield for an additional question?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I will.

Mr. COBURN. I have said I do not deny this work needs to be done. Can you foresee that the environmental impact assessments for all this will be completed in time for this money to be used this fiscal year?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Yes. Because I am told the declaration of emergency by the State and the contingent emergency by the President, which he said he would declare this morning, effectively clears that for this particular work on these particular high-priority sites.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield for one additional question?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Yes, I will.

Mr. COBURN. Does it concern you at all that over the 46 years of this project the engineering by the Corps of Engineers for these levees is requiring them to go back now, in 29 places, and fix what they should have done right the first time? Does that concern you at all?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Well, of course it does. Of course it concerns me. But we learn in this business. And I think Katrina was a big learning lesson for all of us. And we have not done right by our infrastructure.

One of the problems is, as we have to cut discretionary spending that is nondefense, not entitlements, the only thing we are cutting--we are cutting 18 percent of what we spend every year. These are Federal levees. They are owned by the Federal Government. There is a responsibility to protect the people behind them.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield for one additional question?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Of course.

Mr. COBURN. Would it make sense to you that we could, in a supplemental, change the authorization under the emergency process so that the Sacramento Corps could use their \$13.5 million they are going to have in unobligated balances at the end of this year? We could do that just as well as borrow an additional \$10.9 million against our children; could we not?

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Well, I have not looked at this. I was at the Napa River, where we have a big flood project, and there is a problem there. The corps there told me they could not transfer funds above a certain amount. And I believe there was some provision in a prior supplemental to prevent the transferring of that money.

Let me say this to the Senator. Do I believe this is a life emergency? Yes. Do I believe that any day these 100,000 people and 33,000 homes could be flooded? Yes. Why? Because I know they are 20 feet below the water level. I know the water level is the highest it has ever been. I know the levees are eroded. I know what they call ``boils" are popping up all over.

I know it could happen. And when it happens, it happens so fast because there is so much water. So because I know it, and now you know it, we have an obligation to do something about it. And that is what the Government is here for: to save lives in the event of an emergency.

We also know that earthquake probabilities are way up, and this could be devastating. So this work has to be done. We are asking for money in the Energy and Water bill. We will have additional money there. We are going through the regular channels. But this high priority work should be done now. And we should get the money there as fast as we possibly can.

It could happen tomorrow, it could happen the next day, the next week. I

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could not live with myself if it happened, and, respectfully, you could not live with yourself if it happened because you now know it can happen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I wish to say to Senator *Feinstein* how much I appreciate her leadership on this in the Appropriations Committee. I wish to say to the chairman of the committee how much I appreciate his understanding of what we are going through in our State with historic rains, historic flooding. I thank the Appropriations Committee for listening to Senator *Feinstein* when she transmitted a request from the two of us and also from our Governor. This is a bipartisan request.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the **RECORD** a letter written to Senator *Coburn* from Governor Schwarzenegger. I also ask unanimous consent to have printed in the **RECORD** information regarding the Sacramento region.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the **RECORD**, as follows:

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR,

Sacramento, CA, May 2, 2006.

Hon. **TOM COBURN**,

*U.S. Senate, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.*

**DEAR SENATOR COBURN:** I am writing regarding your proposed amendment to the supplemental appropriations bill that seeks to block additional funds needed to repair California's Central Valley levee system.

As you may know, I am working very closely with Senator Feinstein and members of the California Congressional Delegation to secure additional federal funds to share in the costs of repairing California's

Central Valley levee system. The need for funding and quick action could not be more urgent and that is why I have made it my top priority to work with our State Legislature to enact a major infrastructure bond initiative that would dedicate \$2.5 billion in state funds for urgently needed levee repairs along this federally authorized flood control system.

Our work to restore structural integrity to our levee system began over a year ago. We cannot wait for a disaster to strike and must use the lessons of Katrina and act now. Prior to Katrina, New Orleans had a 250-year level of flood protection. Sacramento has a 100-year level of flood protection. This is the lowest of any major city in the United States. It is only a matter of time before there is a significant levee breach or system failure. Such an event would flood valuable farmland that produces food for the entire nation. All of Sacramento and other Central Valley towns would be flooded. According to modeling done by the City and County of Sacramento, a single levee breach would cause flooding in many areas of the City with depths over 15 feet. A flood event of this magnitude would cut off Southern California's water supply. Such an event would also cause a major economic disruption in California and across the nation. Most troubling is without action, the lives of thousands of Californians are at risk.

As you know, Senators Feinstein and Boxer have worked very closely with Chairmen Cochran and Domenici to include funds in the pending supplemental appropriations bill for certain levee and flood control improvements in the Sacramento region. These funds are for identified improvements that can be completed this fiscal year in federally authorized flood control projects.

I support these funds and want to assure you that this is a necessary and urgent time for Congress to act. Moreover, any investment at this time decreases the chances that Congress will have to respond in the future with another far more expensive emergency funding bill to address a widespread flood disaster in California.

I ask that you recognize this as necessary emergency funding and support this as part of the supplemental appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger.

--

THE SACRAMENTO REGION IS AT GREATER RISK OF FLOODING THAN ANY OTHER MAJOR U.S. METROPOLITAN AREA--FULL FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP IS CRITICAL TO PROTECTING THIS VITAL REGION

Sacramento: A Region at Risk

The city of Sacramento is at the confluence of two great rivers, the Sacramento and the American. And while these rivers help shape the Sacramento region's identity, they also pose a very real, very serious risk--flooding.

A catastrophic flood will devastate lives, property and the economy. Nearly a half-million residents who make the city of Sacramento their home will be impacted. That number grows to over 2.2 million people within the six-county region surrounding the city. Regionally, one million jobs will be affected by a catastrophic flood and the direct and indirect economic loss of property and economic activity could total nearly \$30 billion. The Sacramento region represents over \$73.3 billion annually in gross regional product.

A major flood in the Sacramento region will send economic shockwaves rippling throughout the region and state. These include serious impacts to principal transportation arteries such as interstates 5 and 80,

railway thoroughfares, and Sacramento International Airport. This jeopardizes over \$2.6 billion in Central Valley agriculture and livestock production--a vital national resource.

The Sacramento region is a civic, commercial, healthcare and economic hub for greater California and must be protected. The Sacramento region serves as the capital of California--the world's sixth largest economy. Sacramento area levees protect nearly one million acres of farmland in the Sacramento Valley. At least 10 major hospital facilities are found within the region. In addition, the Sacramento metropolitan region serves as a "nucleus" for state and federal civic activity, providing a home to 1,300 government facilities supplying over 200,000 public sector jobs.

Given all that the city, region, state and even the nation stand to lose, it is astonishing that the Sacramento region has the lowest level of flood protection of any major U.S. metropolitan area. The 1986 high-water event demonstrated the region's population centers are extremely vulnerable. It is estimated that six hours of additional rain during that time would have led to catastrophic failure of the region's flood protection system.

Since 1986, federal, state and local interests have invested over \$400 million in levee improvements, reservoir re-operations and floodplain restoration, but critical flood protection deficits, including erosion, stability, levee heights and underseepage, still exist. These deficits prevent the Sacramento region from achieving even 100-year flood protection in many places and have made flood protection the Sacramento regional Congressional delegation's number one public safety issue.

Sacramento must achieve a minimum of 200-year flood protection immediately.

#### Full Federal Partnership: A Critical Element

While local and state leadership are unified in making flood protection a priority, it is essential that FY 2007 appropriations fully fund the \$89,240,000 federal share of Sacramento's authorized flood protection program. Appropriations are critical to continuing levee improvements on the Sacramento and American rivers and Folsom Dam--a necessary part of protecting the region's livelihood and achieving a minimum of 200-year flood protection.

Similarly, it is essential that federal partners support and reward state and local efforts to enhance flood protection. These efforts, which are sustained by state and local funding initiatives, should be incorporated into the traditional federal/local flood protection partnership using appropriate crediting and reimbursement arrangements. This is necessary in order to expedite project permitting, contracting, and construction activities.

Mrs. BOXER. I am going to read part of this letter. He says:

Our work to restore structural integrity to our levee system began over a year ago. We cannot wait for a disaster to strike and must use the lessons of Katrina and act now. Prior to Katrina, New Orleans had a 250-year level of flood protection.

And then the Governor says:

Sacramento has 100-year level of flood protection.

That is optimistic. Most experts tell us that it is an 85-year level. And whether it is 85 years or 100 years, it is the lowest of any major city in the U.S.

The Governor writes:

It is only a matter of time before there is a significant levee breach or system failure.

This is important for the Senator from Oklahoma to hear. I know he has been very gracious in filling me in on this and saying: I didn't go after your other items but just this one. But the fact is, this one is as important as all the rest. The Corps has told us they need these funds to move forward.

Here is what the Governor says:

Such [a flooding] event would flood valuable farmland that produces food for [our] entire nation.

I say to my friend from Oklahoma, please, listen to us, because the food supply for the entire Nation is at stake, according to Governor Schwarzenegger, Senator *Feinstein*, myself, and a bipartisan delegation in the Congress.

The Governor says:

All of Sacramento and other Sacramento Valley towns would be flooded. According to modeling [that has been done], a single levee breach would cause flooding in many areas of the City with depths over 15 feet. A flood event of this magnitude would cut off Southern California's water supply.

I say to my friend from Oklahoma, in this body we are all equal, two Senators from every State. We have 37 million people in my State. Sacramento is a huge growth area. I will get into the

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numbers in a minute. We are not talking about a few people being hurt. We are talking about a catastrophe. We are talking about farmland. We are talking about the State's water supply. About two-thirds of the water supply in the State comes from that northern area.

When my friend started, he was very nice and said he doesn't doubt the fact that the Sacramento levees are a problem, and that San Francisco has been having problems. I wrote down what he said. He said: San Francisco and the area south of there. This is the area north of San Francisco. This is Sacramento. I don't think my friend really, with all due respect, gets the intricacies of what we are dealing with here. There is a difference between north of San Francisco and south because north of San Francisco is where we have delta--again, two-thirds of the water supply of our State--the farmland and all the rest. South of San Francisco, we have Silicon Valley. That has other issues. But right now, we are talking about the Sacramento area, which is north.

The Governor goes on to talk about the economic disruption. Because we are such a large State, people say when California sneezes, the country gets a cold. It is an expression that speaks to the power of our State in terms of economic productivity. And in terms of the goods coming across into the ports of California and going all across into your State and everybody else's--this region is the bread basket. So we ask you to back off this amendment.

This is so not a partisan issue. The Governor writes:

As you know, Senators Feinstein and Boxer have worked closely with Chairmen Cochran and Domenici to include funds in the pending supplemental ..... for certain levee and flood control improvements .....

I support these funds and want to assure you that this is a necessary and urgent time for Congress to act.

The Governor came here. He met with Senator *Domenici* and many Senators. He said:

..... any investment at this time decreases the chances that Congress will have to respond in the future with another far more expensive emergency funding bill to address a widespread flood disaster in California.

I ask that you recognize this as a necessary emergency funding bill. Support this.

I want to show a picture. Senator *Feinstein* showed us a version of this. They all tell a story better than I could. Here you have the Sacramento River. Here you have thousands and thousands of people. Here you have the levees, and here you have the riverbed. And what has happened, if my friend would like to take a look at this--I know he doesn't question that we need a project; he questions whether it belongs in this bill. I understand.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes.

Mr. COBURN. I question how we are paying for it. We are borrowing the money from future generations to do it rather than make the hard decisions of trimming something else. That is important.

Mrs. BOXER. That is what I just said. I said the Senator doesn't oppose us doing this. He doesn't want it in this bill. That is my understanding of his position. I couldn't disagree with you more. When my friend quoted me and I said Iraq should have been in the budget, that is exactly how I feel, because we knew about it. Frankly, we didn't know about this, that we were going to have the kind of events we have had, the rain and the rain and the rain. I will go into the details of how much rain we have had compared to other years and the fact that anything can happen now.

The weather patterns are changing. When I lived in the bay area in California so many years ago, it is too long to remember, when I first came here in

the 1960s, you never had rain in March, let alone April. It was dry. It was dry really from mid-February on. It has been moving forward, and we have March as one of the rainiest months and then April. We had a month this year--April--where we had rain almost every day. It is unheard of. You can see how muddy this is. You can see the breaks here in the riverbank.

I will show you another picture on the other side where there is not as much development but the same thing has occurred. These trees were on the other side of the riverbank. Look at these trees. They are now buried in the water. So if we don't go ahead with the Corps now, when the Corps tells us we need to do this now, we are going to lose this riverbank. We are going to lose the levees. And then it is too late.

My friend says he wants to save money. It reminds me of the old adage of penny wise and pound foolish. It is a colloquialism, but the fact is, you have to prevent things. This is an emergency circumstance, as the Governor said. These levees could break. Now we have a snowmelt. That snowmelt occurs, that water gets deeper, the pressure in that river increases, and the riverbank begins to disappear, leaving those levees exposed.

I wish to refer to a document put together by the Chamber of Commerce in Sacramento. It reads, "Sacramento: A Region at Risk." Cities and counties don't like to say, especially chambers of commerce, we are at risk. They don't like to say that because they want to have investment. They want people to come in. They don't go about saying: We are in danger. And when a chamber of commerce goes out and says: We are in danger--and these are Republicans mostly, and these are as conservative as my friend from Oklahoma; they know that an investment is not wasteful spending if, in fact, we are going to save money at the end of the day. How much would we have saved if we had built stronger, better levees in Louisiana? Untold, probably billions. I don't think my friend is at all a fiscal conservative by taking away \$11 million.

It is reckless. I hope and pray that my colleagues are listening to this debate and are looking at these pictures and understanding what we are talking about.

The Sacramento area faces a triple flood threat, and it faces it now. We have a confluence of two major rivers, the threat of a deteriorating flood control system, and the threat of near record precipitation this year. We are talking about 165,000 homes, nearly 500,000 residents, the State capital, and many businesses providing 200,000 jobs. It is also the hub of the six-county regional economy, providing hundreds of thousands of jobs. A major flood along the lower Sacramento or American Rivers would cripple the region's economy. I will go into that tomorrow because Senator *Feinstein* and I each have 15 minutes in the morning. I will save some of my talk for then.

California has the world's fifth largest economy, and we are quibbling over \$11 million that the Corps says it needs to fix up these riverbanks. How outrageous, how shortsighted, how foolish. I don't understand why my friend is doing this. We talked. He feels deeply about it. I respect that. I voted with him a couple of times. I have been very careful, picking and choosing, sticking with the committee when I felt the committee was right, joining my friend. But I don't understand this one. This one is inexplicable.

The average family understands that if they have a problem with their roof, they fix it. They don't put it off. They fix it so that their home is not destroyed. It is straightforward.

Let's look at the pocket again. They call this the pocket of Sacramento; 112,000 people are at risk, and you can see clearly where this riverbank has deteriorated. On New Year's Day, Californians in the northern and central parts of our State awoke to flooding that cost the State \$200 million. We are talking about \$11 million so we can mitigate what comes next. But precipitation after January 1 has kept river levels very high, further stressing and eroding our critical flood control infrastructure.

Precipitation, including snow pack, as the snows melt, is nearly twice the normal amount, 174 percent of normal, and that is just as of last week. And the snows are just now starting to melt.

We have another threat to this area. My colleague, Senator *Feinstein*, said it beautifully: How would we feel if we did something on this Senate floor today that turned our backs on this issue and then we had a tragedy?

We would not feel very good about it. So I am going to save the rest of my talk until tomorrow. But I am going to say to you, Mr. President, again thank you. It is very rare that we have such bipartisan cooperation in our State. This is not a Republican issue or a Democratic issue. We will have Republicans suffer if we have a problem and

[Page: S3885] [GPO's PDF](#)

we will have Democrats suffer. We are Californians united. Our Governor has recognized the crisis. He declared a state of emergency earlier this year to expedite improvement of this system.

Everything we did in this bill we cleared with the Army Corps and they say they can use this money. They need this money. They are going to move forward with these repairs. So my friend from Oklahoma can make the case every which way he wants. He can use rhetoric and say anything he wants. The bottom line is this, and I will quote Representative Dan Lungren, a Republican, who is very well respected among our Republican friends in this body. He said:

Today the Sacramento region has half the flood protection and twice the risk as did the city of New Orleans prior to Katrina. The cost of recovering from a flood-related disaster far exceeds the price of guarding against it.

Unlike other issues where we have come to the floor and it has been Republican versus Democrat, I can honestly say to you that I stand here representing a bipartisan, strong majority in my State and, hopefully, in the Senate, that says this: The 2005 hurricane season taught us some hard lessons--that we neglect shoring up eroded and damaged flood control infrastructure for major metropolitan areas at our peril.

We always say we must learn from history. We must surely learn from recent history. Sometimes we forget history that occurred way back, but we certainly should remember history from a year ago.

I urge my colleagues to vote a resounding no on this Coburn amendment and to take a stand for innocent people in this valley, in this area, these farmlands, these farmers, and the economy, and don't take out \$11 million that could do so much good to restore these banks.

I thank the Chair.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, the arguments that have been made by the Senators from California, in terms of needing to fix things, are probably accurate. But I am sitting here thinking to myself, if it would take only \$11 million to take care of this, and to know that the earliest this money is going to be there is 8 weeks, if I were Governor of California, I would find \$11 million. I would get that tomorrow. If it is not going to get done tomorrow, we ought to be asking why not, if the threat is that great and it imperils that much of the economy and that many people.

I still raise the same questions. I am not denying this needs to get done. I am denying how we pay for it. We are not making the hard choices to cut something else out of the bill to pay for this because it is a higher priority. No, what we are doing is taking the money from future generations because we refuse to make those hard choices.

That is what it is all about. We could have reprogrammed money within the Corps to get this done. The Governor could ask the legislature for \$11 million to get this done starting tomorrow. If there are 29 sites, what we do know about the Corps is it doesn't do anything fast. In this project, we know what they have done over the last 46 years has not been sufficient because they are having these problems. We will finish the debate tomorrow morning. The point is, I don't deny that this needs to get done. If it is the case that has been made by the Senators from California, then why hasn't it already been done? If there is this impending emergency, why hasn't California ponied up to put up the \$11 million that is so desperately needed right now to pay for it, rather than asking the rest of the country's children and grandchildren? If this bill had come to the floor paid for, I would not be out here. But it is not paid for. We are going to go write the bills and bonds to pay for this \$11 million. Maybe that is what we should do. Maybe that is the priority we should have. But I would think that the rest of the American people ought to say, where are you getting the money?

We are not making hard choices. We are passing it down the line. I agree if something were to happen, the cost would be much greater. I am a physician and I believe in prevention. That is what this debate is all about, preventing America from becoming a second-rate economy because we refuse to make hard decisions here on how we spend money. That is what this is about. I don't deny the desire to address this issue. That doesn't have anything to do with it. But if it is an emergency as described at the present time, why doesn't California fix it? Why hasn't California ponied up the \$11 million, which is a small amount there. It is the fifth largest economy in the world. They can come up with \$11 million.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. COBURN. Yes.

Mrs. BOXER. Does the Senator not know that this is a federally authorized project? Is the Senator unaware of that?

Mr. COBURN. I understand that.

Mrs. BOXER. Cost sharing goes along with this project just as with every other project. So for the Senator to stand up and suggest that we don't pay into this project is simply false.

Mr. COBURN. Reclaiming my time, since it is a question, this isn't about whether you pay your share. It is about whether it is an emergency. If it is an emergency, then why wasn't it done last

time? Why are we going back--why isn't a Corps that spent 46 years doing this project going back to repair what they didn't do right in the first place?

I am going back to the main point and then I am through. I will talk again in the morning. Where is the money coming from? Had the money been paid for, I would not be out here. But the money isn't paid for. It is borrowed. So when you take \$10.9 million, take your calculator out and put it at 30 years and amortize it at 6 percent, you will come up to about \$55 million. That is what we are actually going to pay to do this \$10.9 million because we are borrowing the money. That is my point. I am not against doing it, not against getting it done, against prevention. What I am against is borrowing the money against the future of this country because we refuse to make the hard choices.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I cannot allow certain things that were said to go unchallenged. My friend says this is not about paying your share, after he said it was about that. He made a big point, why doesn't California do something? Of course, we are doing something. We abide by the law. I have to say to my friend, if something happens in California, a bread basket of this country in many ways, there is going to be suffering throughout this country. If something happens to this economy, let alone the 112,000 people who live in this pocket, this particular amendment will put them at greater risk.

My friend says he believes in prevention. He is a doctor. I am sure he does and I am sure he does a wonderful job at that. But he doesn't believe in prevention right now, I will tell you that. Because that is what Senator *Feinstein*, Governor Schwarzenegger, and both Democratic candidates for Governor--everybody agrees this has to be done. This is a Federal project. This is not a State project. This is a Federal project with a State share. The Army Corps has a responsibility which they have stepped up to the plate to do, and they told us they need these funds. As far as not paying for this, we know that emergencies get special treatment around here because they are emergencies. My friend says, why is this an emergency? Take a look at this. This isn't the way a river is supposed to look, the way a riverbank is supposed to look. This isn't the way a tree that was on the land is supposed to look, when it was on the other side of the riverbank. When you get the second highest predicted snow pack melt known to the history since they started taking down the record, in the history of California, yes, you have an emergency.

I know my friend from Oklahoma left the floor. I hope he joins me in a pay-as-you-go budget because I have voted for that every year. Frankly, right before the Bush administration, we had surpluses. Now we have deficits. I will admit that. I support pay-as-you-go budgeting. I have voted for it. We can talk about that another day. But this is a true emergency, just as I believe funding the veterans home in Mississippi was, which I was sorry I didn't get a chance to vote on. I listened to the debate. I could hardly believe my ears that the Senator from Oklahoma

was objecting to making sure that our veterans, elderly veterans, could go home. What is wrong? Something is wrong here with these debates. I don't know where the heart is, where the soul is. I don't know where the common sense is.

I pray and hope that tomorrow, come morning, we are able to get the votes to keep this funding in the supplemental. Again, I thank Senator *Cochran*. I thank the Chair for his patience.

I yield the floor.

<http://feinstein.senate.gov/06releases/r-levee-coburn.htm>

Senators Feinstein and Boxer Beat Back Coburn Effort  
to Strip Funding for California Levees and Flood Control

*- Also secure additional \$13.4 million, bringing total for  
California levees in the Supplemental to \$37 million -*

May 3, 2006

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer (both D-Calif.) today fought off an effort by Senator Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) to strip millions of dollars of federal funding to strengthen California levees and flood control from the Senate Supplemental Appropriations bill.

Senator Coburn, who had previously offered an amendment striking millions in funding for Sacramento River Bank protection, today withdrew his amendment.

**“I was delighted to hear a few moments ago from Senator Coburn that he was withdrawing his amendment to delete funding from the supplemental for emergency, priority levee repairs in and around Sacramento,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“This means that the bill will have \$23.3 million for the immediate repair of 29 critical erosion sites along the Sacramento River Bank identified by the State and the Army Corps of Engineers. Also in the bill is \$5.1 million for levee work on the American River, \$7.1 million for levee repairs on South Sacramento Streams, and \$1.5 million for studies to determine where repairs in the Delta can be made on a rapid basis.”**

**“The bottom line is that human life and property hangs in the balance based on the sustainability of these levees. The land is below water level, sometimes as much as 20 feet below. Therefore a levee break can bring catastrophe. The State and the Federal government, as well as individual private property owners, need to move as aggressively as possible to see that levees are kept in a safe and stable condition.”**

**“I was so pleased when I received a call from Senator Coburn this morning saying that he was withdrawing his amendment,”** Senator Boxer said. **“Senator Coburn said we ‘made some really good points.’ Well, the point is that we simply cannot take the risk of ignoring vulnerabilities in our flood control infrastructure after we have seen Katrina and the direct results of infrastructure deterioration.”**

If the bill is approved by the Senate (which is expected today), it will then go to conference where it will be reconciled with the House version of the bill. There is no California flood control funding in the House-passed bill.

Feinstein and Boxer also announced that they had secured an additional \$13.4 million in the bill. This funding is on top of the \$23.6 million provided in committee, bringing the total funding contained in the bill to \$37 million. It is considered contingent-emergency funding, meaning that it would become available only if the President requests the money and certifies that it is an emergency.

Last fall, Congress provided \$41.005 million for the highest priority levee restoration and flood control projects in fiscal year 2006. The additional funding, which was part of an amendment sponsored by Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM) providing \$2.2 billion for Army Corps of Engineers projects in New Orleans, would bring federal funding on highest flood control priorities in the Central Valley to \$78.005 million in FY 06.

Attached is a list of projects that would receive funding in the Supplemental Appropriations bill:

**Following is a list the projects that the \$37 million go for:**

**South Sacramento Streams - \$7.1 million (up from \$6.25 million in committee)**

The project in southeastern Sacramento County includes building 12 miles of floodwalls and constructing 13 miles of levee improvements. The completed project improvements will provide minimum 100-year protection to over 100,000 residents.

**Sacramento River Bank Protection - \$23.3 million (up from \$11.3 million in committee)**

The project in and around the City of Sacramento provides erosion control bank protection for the Sacramento River Flood Control Project levees. One hundred eighty-three actively eroding sites on levees banks have been identified, 29 of which are considered to have a high potential for failure.

**AmericanRiver Common Features - \$5.1 million (up from \$3.3 million in committee)**

This project includes levee improvements along the lower American River and Sacramento River . When complete, these improvements will protect the 50,000 residents of Rancho Cordova in eastern Sacramento County as well as 400,000 City of Sacramento residents downstream.

**DeltaIslands and Levees Feasibility Study - \$1.25 million**

This long term feasibility study to conduct the Delta Risk Management Strategy identifies the levees and islands in need of repairs beyond the short term authorized CalFed work.

**Short-term Delta levee assessment (CALFED 180-day study) - \$250,000**

This funding goes to continue coordination and initiate design data collection on projects related to the recommendations found in the Sacramento - San Joaquin Delta Report to Congress (180-day report).

The San Diego Union-Tribune  
**July 24, 2006 Monday**  
**SECTION: LOCAL; Pg. B-1**

## THE ART OF LEISURE

**BYLINE:** Melissa Domsic

### **DATELINE: IMPERIAL BEACH**

**IMPERIAL BEACH** -- Thousands of people hit the **beach** to take advantage of the ocean breezes while listening to live music, watching fireworks, and scoping out sand sculptures at the 26th annual U.S. Open **Sandcastle** Competition over the weekend.

**Imperial Beach** lifeguard Sgt. Richard Hidalgo said the crowds numbered between 350,000 and 400,000.

Many people were drawn to the festivities to get out of the heat, said city of **Imperial Beach** spokeswoman Julie Walke. "It was really nice and cool as you walked along the sand," she said.

The weekend started off with a treasure hunt for keys to a 2007 Jeep Compass. Of 200 people chosen to participate, San Diego resident Chris Robinson found the grand prize.

Forty sand sculpture teams competed in master and amateur categories for \$21,000 in prizes. The 10-person Arch I Sand team from Mission Viejo won first place in the masters competition for its poker party-themed sculpture.

July 21, 2006 Friday

**SECTION:** LOCAL; Pg. B-2:R,E,C; B-1:S

**LENGTH:** 495 words

**HEADLINE:** Organizers turn to sponsors to fund **sandcastle** contest

**BYLINE:** Melissa Domsic, Melissa Domsic is a Union-Tribune intern.

**DATELINE: IMPERIAL BEACH**

**BODY:**

**IMPERIAL BEACH** -- After they asked the city for a loan last year, U.S. Open **Sandcastle** Competition organizers stepped up their sponsorship pursuit and have enough funds for this weekend's \$250,000 event.

Festivities for the 26th annual event will start today with a contest to find keys to a new Jeep Compass buried in the sand. About 3,000 people signed up for the event, and about 200 were selected to compete. The contest is special to this year's event because Jeep is the title sponsor.

The **sandcastle** parade, a children's **sandcastle** competition and fireworks are scheduled for tomorrow, and the actual sand sculpture competition is on Sunday.

Last year the San Diego Unified Port District offered to donate services instead of cash for the event. Before that, the port had contributed nearly \$540,000 in cash and services for the **sandcastle** event during the previous 22 years. Event organizers turned down the port's offer of services.

They then asked the city for a \$25,000 one-time loan. The city agreed to give them \$21,000 to fund the fireworks show for the next couple of years.

This year, organizers did not ask the port for donations. Their sponsorship committee, which formed last year, worked to get sponsors and signed up at least 25. Organizers also hired an outside marketing company to help, said Angelo Pallotto, the event's chairman.

"We just got real aggressive and went out and did what we had to do," he said. "(The committee) hit the ground running right after last year's event."

Jeep gave \$25,000. Normally a donation between \$50,000 and \$75,000 is needed to be the title sponsor, but by May there was still no title sponsor and Jeep's \$25,000 donation was more than enough to cover the event.

The competition has bigger sponsors this year, said Renne Evans, who does sponsorship promotion for the event.

Evans said AARP is a sponsor and will recruit "real people models," who are at least 50 years old, at the competition to be featured in the group's magazine next year.

Arrowhead Aquapod Water is also a sponsor and will provide children's games, she said,

"They've just done an excellent job in bringing in some major corporate sponsors," Mayor Diane Rose said.

The sponsors won't change the event, but they will enhance it, Pallotto said.

"One thing we do not ever want to lose sight of is that this is about **sandcastles**, sculptures made of sand on the **beach**, and that's what this is all about," he said.

If you go

More than 250,000 people are expected to attend the 26th annual U.S. Open **Sandcastle's** festivities in **Imperial Beach**.

**The Washington Post**

washingtonpost.com

The Washington Post

June 17, 2001 Sunday

Final Edition

SECTION: EDITORIAL; Pg. B07

## Army Engineers Hit the Beaches

By Orrin H. Pilkey

The start of our mass annual migration to the ocean shore is as good a time as any to point out that many of our nation's beaches are in real trouble -- and getting worse fast because of the way we're treating them.

The most dramatic example of ill-advised government action is provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has been steadily "nourishing" the beaches of various politically connected seacoast communities that are concerned about erosion of their shores. The nourishing is done by placing new sand on the beaches, usually pumped in from an offshore source.

As with certain of the nation's rivers -- where the Corps of Engineers has over the years gradually reduced the size of flood plains and increased the potential for damage by building one dike after another -- non-engineering solutions for the beaches are never seriously considered.

And just as with the river dikes, the density of development behind an artificially rebuilt beach often increases dramatically. High rises, hotels and condos replace beach cottages, leaving more buildings than ever dangerously positioned when the next big flood or storm comes.

Beach nourishment differs from diking, however, in that it must be redone, often at three- to five-year intervals and at considerable cost, perpetually. The price is heightened by the fact that sea levels are rising and are expected to rise further due to global warming. The lifespans of artificial beaches will thus grow shorter and their costs will increase.

Already more than 300 East Coast and Gulf Coast beaches have been nourished, and more are being added to the list each year. In 1997 the nation spent \$ 150 million on beach nourishment. The cost is undoubtedly much larger now.

The recently approved (but not yet funded) 14-mile-long Outer Banks beach nourishment project in North Carolina is projected to cost \$ 1.8 billion over 50 years. That boils down to a subsidy of \$ 30,000 per year for 50 years for each beachfront property that is

supposed to be protected by the new beach.

A generation from now, we will likely reach a point at which the great lengths of nourished shoreline and the rapid loss and high costs of the artificial beaches will be unacceptable to taxpayers. Already the Bush administration is proposing to lower the federal share of nourishment cost from 65 percent to 35 percent.

Increasing the local share is a logical approach, since the local people created the erosion problem by building too close to the beaches. But few beachfront communities can afford to pay for their own beaches, and states with long shorelines are unlikely to take on the financial burden either.

I predict that in a couple of generations, the barrier islands now being nourished will fall below the horizon of the society's concern. By then, our descendants will be preoccupied with protecting Manhattan, Boston, Miami and other sea-level cities from the rising waters.

When nationwide beach nourishment is no longer feasible, one alternative will be to demolish buildings or move them elsewhere. But the expensive rows of high-rises that have been encouraged by beach nourishment may make this politically impossible. What most likely will happen instead is that the beachfront communities will protect themselves with seawalls, a coastal engineering approach that is now illegal in six states.

Seawalls destroy beaches, and many if not most of our major recreational beaches would eventually disappear if they were erected. Walls or no walls, massive destruction of beachfront property would occur in future large storms.

What ought we be doing instead of replenishing beaches? One wise move would be to take some of that beach money and use it to move development back from the shore. The Corp of Engineers' own figures show that the purchase of beachfront property would be cheaper than beach nourishment.

And if we do nourish beaches, why not then restrict the development densities, through zoning, to reduce the problem for future generations?

Whether or not all agree with this assessment, Americans should be studying and debating the future of our shorelines. The Corps shouldn't be allowed to continue "reengineering" our beaches without the nation's taking a long and hard look into the future.

The writer is a professor of geology and director of the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines at Duke University.

Sacramento Bee  
February 18, 2007

"Benefits of Auburn dam outweigh costs of a flood; Good forest management can be balanced with logging interests"

Rep. John Doolittle, R-Roseville, and Dan Lungren, R-Gold River, are responding to the Jan. 31 article "Auburn dam price tag soars."

The Bureau of Reclamation's recent report provided insight on what an Auburn dam could mean for our region. The report is clear that under certain conditions an Auburn dam could:

- \* Provide 500-year flood protection;
- \* Generate significant water supply and hydroelectric power revenues; and
- \* Provide positive recreational and environmental benefits along the American River.

Congress directed the bureau to prepare a special report within the parameters of the latest design for an Auburn dam, which took place in 1978. This required the bureau to adapt a 30-year-old design to meet current conditions and make numerous assumptions to develop a range of potential benefit values and costs.

It is unfortunate that The Bee selected the most unfavorable range of benefit and cost values and presented it as if it were a report finding. The report states no conclusions or recommendations but rather provides information to use as a catalyst for a constructive discussion about flood control.

One finding that is clear, however, is that our region is faced with twice the risk and half the protection from catastrophic flooding as New Orleans had been prior to Katrina.

Tacoma, St. Louis, Dallas and Kansas City are the other major cities at risk of catastrophic flooding. All have 500-year flood protection. Besides New Orleans, only Omaha has a mere 250-year flood protection. Astoundingly, our region currently has roughly 85-year flood protection. We have labored hard to put in motion major repairs of the levees and modifications of Folsom dam, and look forward to their completion over the coming decade. Unfortunately, the most Sacramento can hope to achieve from all these improvements is 220-year flood protection.

The costs of an Auburn dam referenced in the report are undeniably large, though it is highly possible with the new technology, hydrology and seismology available that a reformulated dam could cost significantly less. But in the context of the \$124 billion the federal government has spent post-Katrina, the expenditure of \$9.6 billion to achieve 500-year flood protection seems prudent.

We recognize that there would be trade-offs if an Auburn dam were built. Would those costs outweigh the lives and property saved if a catastrophic flood were to hit the region? And if an Auburn dam is not an option, then what is? Let us not lose sight of the fact that our efforts are aimed at reversing the greatest potential natural threat facing the people of this region.

*Whose Beaches, Whose Burdens? At \$60 Million a Mile, Rebuilding New Jersey's Shore Stirs Debate on Access, Effectiveness* *The Washington Post* April 20, 1999, Tuesday, Final Edition

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April 20, 1999, Tuesday, Final Edition

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**LENGTH:** 1654 words

**HEADLINE:** Whose **Beaches**, Whose Burdens? At \$60 Million a Mile, Rebuilding New Jersey's Shore Stirs Debate on Access, Effectiveness

**BYLINE:** Michael Grunwald, Washington Post Staff Writer

**DATELINE:** SEA BRIGHT, N.J.

**BODY:**

The stay-away signs stood along Ocean Avenue like a row of guards: NO STOPPING. NO STANDING. NO PARKING. Dery Bennett snorted and parked his truck anyway.

Bennett then crossed the highway to a similarly decorated wooden stairway: PRIVATE PROPERTY. NO TRESPASSING. Another snort. He climbed the stairs over a seawall and strolled onto a spacious **beach**. The waves of the Atlantic slapped the shore. A salty breeze rustled his steel-wool gray hair.

"Nice," sighed Bennett, 68, the sun-seared director of the American Littoral Society, an environmental group in neighboring Sandy Hook. "Too bad we had to break the law to get here."

Sea Bright, just below Sandy Hook about 25 miles south of New York, is not the first town with an inaccessible public **beach**, but this is no ordinary **beach**. **This beach** was built by the federal government, by pumping sand -- half a million dump trucks worth of sand -- from the ocean to the foot of the seawall. It is the first product of the largest and costliest "**beach nourishment**" project ever, an effort to replenish all 127 miles of the fast-eroding Jersey shore and keep them replenished for 50 years.

The project ultimately could cost as much as \$ 9 billion, and the federal government would pay 65 percent of that. To critics such as Bennett, that is a recipe for a beachfront boondoggle, symbolized by the strict no-access signs here in Sea Bright. Even the project's ardent supporters concede that when American taxpayers restore a **beach** in a coastal community, it should not be so hard for them to reach.

"I have to admit, the limited public access bugs me, too," said Ken Smith, 53, a real estate agent and coastal lobbyist who represents Sea Bright and 15 other Jersey shore communities. "Sea Bright's **beach** is open in name, but it's not really open."

The battle in Washington over **beach nourishment** is heating up like sand on a summer day, pitting budget officials, environmentalists and taxpayer groups against coastal congressmen. New Jersey has been by far the most aggressive state pursuing federal "sand dollars," but Florida and California are pushing for help for their mammoth coastlines, with equally mammoth budget implications. Several Washington-area communities have received nourishment money as well, including Ocean City, Md., and Virginia **Beach**.

President Clinton's budget aides want to pull out of the **beach**-building business, or at least shift more of the costs to the states and communities that enjoy most of the benefits. Meanwhile, environmentalists have complained that federal funding may encourage even more construction along the famously overdeveloped New Jersey coast, and have warned that ecosystems tend to suffer when human beings try to overrule nature. They have also pointed out that the ocean level is slowly rising; Bennett once predicted that Sea

Bright's 250-foot-wide **beach** would wash back into the ocean within a year.

But Bennett was wrong. The **beach** has lasted more than three years already, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does not expect to replenish it again for another three. Here in Sea Bright, a brutally exposed three-mile ribbon between the Shrewsbury River and the Atlantic Ocean, the town's 1,700 residents believe the new sand infusion has protected Ocean Avenue as well as shorefront homes that used to be inundated almost every time it rained. It has also raised property values and provided an enjoyable **beach** for residents, without attracting too many summertime outsiders notorious for urinating in their yards.

"It's been a godsend for this community," said Sea Bright borough councilor Jack Keeler. "It's helped businesses. It's saved homes. It's really improved the quality of life here."

The current plan is designed to protect boardwalks and buildings along the entire Jersey shore, all the way from Sandy Hook, a narrow peninsula across the bay from New York City, down to Cape May, a tourist mecca across the bay from Delaware. The plan calls for sand to be pumped along all 127 oceanside miles (plus about 25 more bayside miles) by 2003, and periodic renourishment to continue until 2045. The projected costs are about \$ 60 million a mile.

The Jersey shore was once a Gilded Age getaway for the New York and Philadelphia elite, but it has evolved into a mixed-income strip of resort towns. It still has the seaside mansions and exclusive **beach** clubs of upscale towns like Avalon, plus the megacasinos of Atlantic City. But it also has the bathing-suit bars and creaky boardwalks of struggling communities such as Asbury Park, made famous by blue-collar rocker Bruce Springsteen, who sang that "down the shore everything's all right."

Sea Bright falls somewhere in the middle, with a median income of \$ 45,000. It started as a fishing village in the 19th century, then became a popular summer destination for "bennies," the shore nickname for day-trippers from the Bayonne-Elizabeth-Newark triangle. For years, its raucous reputation inspired the saying that "there's no law east of the Shrewsbury."

But during the 1980s real estate boom, the town's focus shifted away from its visitors, as developers tore down most of the marinas and bars to build 24-unit condominium complexes. (A state law had eased the permit process for seaside projects with fewer than 25 units.) Today, 45 percent of the town's residents are white-collar commuters.

There is another obvious explanation for Sea Bright's shift from summer **beach** town to year-round bedroom community: The **beach** disappeared. Long ago, the town built jetties to block the northern drift of sand. But this armoring of the coast -- a phenomenon some experts call "newjerseyization" -- did not stop erosion, and may have accelerated it.

By the time the nourishment began here in 1995, the ocean was lapping right up to the seawall at high tide.

Even during mild storms, television reporters would race to Sea Bright to record stand-ups in their hip boots, knowing they would find torrential floods and distraught homeowners.

"The TV people still come, but there's not much for them to talk about anymore," said Anthony Ciorra, the Army Corps of Engineers manager in charge of the first phase of the project, from Sea Bright down to Manasquan Inlet. "The **beaches** are performing even better than expected."

There has been one erosion "hot spot" in neighboring Monmouth **Beach**, forcing the Corps to repump sand that had drifted back to sea, but Sea Bright now has an attractive **beach** along its entire shoreline. One mile of it is controlled by private clubs but the other two miles are open to the public.

The only problem is getting there. Sea Bright officials initially opposed the sand-pumping program because they thought their town would be inundated with out-of-towners. They finally acceded after receiving assurances that they would only have to build one public parking lot for 400 cars. Otherwise, there is virtually no public parking in town. There are hundreds of spots on the inland side of the seawall and along Ocean Avenue, but all of them are illegal. As Bennett pointed out, many of the stairways over the seawall

are privately owned as well.

"The new sand made this a happier town, that's for sure," said Lance "Chick" Cunningham, a local marina owner who is also chairman of the planning board. "But the benefits haven't really extended to anyone outside town. You could say it's someone else's money well spent."

The Office of Management and Budget says exactly that. It wants to eliminate funding for new nourishment projects and studies, and to reduce the federal share of "renourishments" to 35 percent. This year, New Jersey's House members are pushing for \$ 41 million for **beach** projects; the administration, which helped overhaul the national flood insurance program in a similar effort to reduce bailouts of coastal properties, is offering only \$ 12 million.

"It's bad enough that people are building houses along the coast," said Bennett, whose truck sports an "Invest in America: Buy a Congressman" bumper sticker. "Why should our tax money protect them?"

That rhetoric infuriates advocates such as Smith and Bernard Moore, the state's top engineer on the project. They believe that **beaches** are public infrastructure, just like roads and sewers; in New Jersey, those **beaches** receive about 160 million visits a year. As for houses along the coast, well, they're already built, so they ought to be protected.

"What are you going to do, buy all the houses along the coast and tear them down?" Moore asked. "Fine. You're also going to have to start printing million-dollar bills."

Smith and Bennett are the leading pro- and anti- voices in New Jersey's **beach** battles, and they are not friends. Bennett calls Smith a "shill for the real estate industry"; Smith calls Bennett a "lousy misanthrope."

But in separate interviews, they both conceded they have common ground. Bennett acknowledged that the sand-pumping has held up better than he thought it would, and even admitted that it may make sense in some areas. Smith, in addition to his concessions about public access, confessed that he thinks the federal government shoulders far too much of the cost of nourishment projects.

In a better world, Smith said, the state would pay more, and he has pushed for that. In a truly ideal world, he said with a joking whisper, some of the well-off, low-tax coastal towns he represents would pay their fair share as well. He has never even tried to push for that.

"The fact is, people in these towns hate taxes, so the feds need to step up to the plate," Smith said. "I know, it's not fair. No question about it. I just want to see these projects happen so badly, it colors my thinking."

[http://www.spd.usace.army.mil/projectfacts/ca/civ/ImperialBeachSilverStrandShoreline/factsheet/346\\_9270.htm](http://www.spd.usace.army.mil/projectfacts/ca/civ/ImperialBeachSilverStrandShoreline/factsheet/346_9270.htm)

## IMPERIAL BEACH, SILVER STRAND SHORELINE, CA

### LOCATION/DESCRIPTION :

The project area is located on the coast of So. Calif. in San Diego Co. about 3.5 miles N. of the Mexico border which consists of narrow beaches and backshore development for commercial, residential, and recreational use.

The project area is fronted by recreational and protective beach subject to erosion average of about 6.6 ft per year. 1982-83 winter storms eroded 75-80 ft. Damage from erosion endangered about 100 beachfront properties, which include houses, condos, apartments and hotels. Inland properties, businesses, streets and

### TOTAL FUNDING:

TOTAL COST:	\$55,300,000	
FEDERAL COST:	\$28,100,000	
NON-FEDERAL COST:	\$27,200,000	
TOTAL FEDERAL COST THROUGH FY 2006:	\$ 0	
FY 2007 BUDGET:	\$0	1/
COST TO COMPLETE:	\$36,414,000	

### FY 06 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

No follow-on funding programmed.

### FY 07 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

No follow-on funding programmed.

### ISSUES AND OTHER INFORMATION :

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The authorized shore protection project for offshore breakwater was enjoined Nov 85 by Federal Court ruling that EIS did not address modifications to Recommended Plan. The GRR, initiated Mar 97 at the request of the City of Imperial Beach & completed Sep 02, recommends initial construction of a 32-meter-wide (105 feet) beach nourishment project along a 2,165-meter-long (7,100 feet) stretch of shoreline, with periodic renourishment every 10 yrs over a 50-yr period of Federal participation, for a total of 4 additional nourishments. AFB Conference held 5 Feb 02 indicated new Congressional authorization is required because the project modification (sand fill with periodic beach nourishment) is a major change in the auth project, i.e., structures. The Initial construction estimate includes costs for the GRR of \$1790.

The final GRR was completed on 30 September 2002 and the Division Engineer's Public Notice issued on 22 October 2002. Chief of Engineers Report was approved and signed Dec 2003. Project awaiting authorization for construction in FY06.

NOT IN FY07 BUDGET: Not in FY06 budget, not authorized for new start construction.

### CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:

Susan Davis (CA\_53)

POINTS OF CONTACT :

Los Angeles District (213)452-3967

[http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/cms/index.php/files/projects/samp/index.php?Itemid=54&id=100&option=com\\_content&task=view](http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/cms/index.php/files/projects/samp/index.php?Itemid=54&id=100&option=com_content&task=view)

Written by Tony Risko

Wednesday, 11 January 2006

**PURPOSE:** The General Reevaluation Report was initiated in March 1997 to determine if a solution exists to reduce the potential for storm damage within the City of Imperial Beach that meets all applicable Federal Water Resources laws and policies, and is consistent with all U. S. Army Corps of Engineers regulations, policies and guidelines relating to the conduct of Federal Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction feasibility studies.

**HISTORY:** The Corps of Engineers was authorized by the River and Harbor Act of 1958 to build five stone groins along the City of Imperial Beach shoreline to stabilize, restore and maintain the former recreational beach, and to prevent over wash into the backshore areas. The plan of improvement provided for a system of five stone groins, the northernmost at the north end of the existing U. S. Naval Radio Station seawall and the other four at intervals of about 300 meters (1,000 feet). Groin No. 1 (northernmost) was completed in September 1959 and extended in 1963. Groin No. 2 was completed in January 1961. The groins were not effective due to the lack of sand supply and the project was deferred.

The City requested that the Corps of Engineers reactivate the project and investigate alternative means to stabilize and restore the beach. A Post Authorization Change Report, reflecting a submerged offshore breakwater in lieu of a groin system, was approved by the Chief of Engineers in 1979. After award of a construction contract in 1985, a Federal District Court enjoined the project on the basis that significant changes had occurred since the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) had been prepared in 1978. The construction was terminated, but as the contract had already been awarded, project cost-shared, contributed funds could not be reimbursed to the local interests. The Imperial Beach authorized project was re-classified to deferred category in 1993-94.

**DESCRIPTION:** The shoreline at the City of Imperial Beach is severely impacted by erosion. An estimate of the sediment budget indicates that approximately 76,000 cubic meters (100,000 cubic yards) per year is eroding from the beach at Imperial Beach, corresponding to a shoreline retreat rate of 2 meters per year (6.6 feet per year). Many private property owners have constructed stone revetments or vertical seawalls to protect their property, but these non-continuous protection structures do not solve the erosion issue, and may fail as the beach recedes. Intermittent beach fills have been constructed, but not at sufficient quantity to halt the shoreline retreat. At the current retreat rate, the shoreline in the northern portion of the study area could reach the first line of development by 2007.

If no action is taken at the City of Imperial Beach, its properties and structures will be increasingly susceptible to damages caused by erosion (including loss of land and of properties), inundation, and wave attack.

**PROPOSED PLAN:** The proposed plan to provide shoreline protection to the City of Imperial Beach involves an initial beach fill project consisting of 1,214,000 cubic meters, resulting in a total beach width of 32 meters beyond the existing beach line. The extent of the fill project will range from Carnation Ave to the southern extent of the City's development, an approximate length of 2,165 meters. The proposed plan includes renourishment cycles estimated once every 10 years over the 50 year project life. It is approximated that 764,000 cubic meters of sand will be placed on the beach during each renourishment cycle.

*Is It Worth It to Rebuild a Beach? Panel's Answer Is a Tentative Yes The New York Times April 2, 1996, Tuesday, Late Edition - Final*

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April 2, 1996, Tuesday, Late Edition - Final

**SECTION:** Section C; Page 4; Column 1; Science Desk

**LENGTH:** 1183 words

**HEADLINE:** Is It Worth It to Rebuild a **Beach?** Panel's Answer Is a Tentative Yes

**BYLINE:** By CORNELIA DEAN

**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON

**BODY:**

EFFORTS to restore eroded **beaches** by dredging up sand and pumping it onshore have been carried out in the United States since 1922, when New York City enlarged the **beach** at Coney Island to accommodate a new boardwalk. Arguments about the cost and longevity of the projects have been going on almost as long.

Now an expert panel convened by the National Research Council has settled the matter -- in a way.

In a long-awaited report, the panel said recently that artificial **beach**-building offered worthwhile protection to coastal towns and could be a boon to tourism, positions that advocates of **beach nourishment** have long advanced. But the panel also agreed with critics that many projects had failed. The report says **beach nourishment** projects succeed only if they are well designed, well built and installed in areas where erosion is minimal and well understood. Often, the report says, these standards are difficult to meet.

Among other things, the report said, engineers who design and build artificial **beaches** must analyze the sources and characteristics of the sand that naturally occurs on the **beach** and the sand that would replace it; erosion patterns; weather and wave conditions; the effects of breakwaters, jetties or other structures on the **beach**, and the way waves and currents carry sand across the **beach** or along it. Only then, the panel concluded, will engineers know much sand an eroded **beach** needs, and how it should be applied.

But often, the report went on, it is difficult for public officials or community leaders to evaluate nourishment designs. The Shore Protection Manual, the Army Corps of Engineers handbook that is the most widely used guide to coastal works in the world, is out of date, the panel said. (It is undergoing a revision.) The panel added that "selecting a qualified engineer is somewhat difficult because, although coastal engineering is a demanding discipline" it is not recognized as a separate discipline by regulatory bodies.

Resolving the dispute over **beach nourishment** is crucial for **beach**-lovers and owners of coastal property, especially on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, where many communities are heavily developed and subject to severe erosion. Over the years, some have tried seawalls, breakwaters, artificial reefs and the like, only to find they are ineffective or even harmful to **beaches**. Now they are turning in increasing numbers to **beach nourishment**.

Nourishment projects involve finding large deposits of **beach**-quality sand, often far offshore or in shoals at the mouths of inlets, dredging it onto barges, and mixing the sand with water so it can be pumped in a slurry onto the **beach**. The projects typically cost tens of millions of dollars, and the Federal Government pays much of the cost.

According to a 1994 report by the Corps of Engineers, which oversees replenishment projects financed by

the Federal Government, the Corps participated in 56 major projects from 1950 through 1993, at a total cost of almost \$1.5 billion, with the Federal Government paying almost \$900 million.

Critics say these projects are, at best, a subsidy for coastal property owners and, at worst, a complete waste of money, the equivalent of using taxpayers' funds to build sand castles that wash away in the first big storm.

But in the new report, the panel said engineers expected a large amount of sand to disappear from artificial **beaches**, initially as currents and waves reshaped them to a more natural profile and then if storms attacked them. The amount of sand lost in a storm, the report says, can be an indication of how much damage would have been done inland, if the artificial **beach** had not been there to buffer the waves.

This was the argument advocates of **beach** management made when severe storms struck much of the East Coast in the fall and winter of 1991-92, destroying much of a **beach**, newly built at a cost of almost \$70 million, at Ocean City, Md.

"One can argue that it did its job protecting the hotels and so on from these very extreme storms," Prof. Paul D. Komar, a panel member and an oceanographer at Oregon State University, said in an interview. "Also," he added, "a lot of the sand has returned to the **beach**."

Storms have similarly damaged the Monmouth **Beach** area of New Jersey where, in one of the largest projects ever, engineers are trying to rebuild miles of vanished **beach**. Many residents of the area were disheartened when much of the sand applied to the shoreline quickly seemed to disappear, but engineers said they had expected it.

Differences are so intense over whether this kind of performance represents success or failure that when two members of the panel debated the issue at a conference in Florida in January, they came to opposite conclusions about the same project, a renourishment effort at Folly **Beach**, S.C.

Prof. Robert G. Dean, a coastal engineer at the University of Florida, praised it; Prof. Orrin H. Pilkey Jr., a geologist at Duke University, said it was "terrible." They debated the report at a conference sponsored by the Florida Shore and **Beach** Preservation Association.

At Folly **Beach**, Professor Dean said, 2.4 million cubic yards of sand was pumped onto the **beach** in 1993, widening the **beach** by almost 60 yards. Although the amount of sand above the waterline decreased, after one year the **beach** was about 40 yards wider than it was when the project began.

Professor Dean, one of the nation's leading experts in coastal engineering, said this project showed that well-designed projects could succeed if they were built in places where underlying erosion was low and where there were no geological features like inlets or artificial structures like jetties to interfere with the natural movement of sand.

"Physics governs these processes," he told the audience. "We do not understand them 100 percent, but over the last two decades, considerable advances have been made" in designing projects and predicting how long they will survive.

Professor Pilkey, perhaps the nation's most prominent critic of **beach nourishment**, called Folly **Beach** "my example of a terrible project." He said its design called for the newly built **beach** to get a booster shot of sand every eight years, as it eroded. But the amount of sand lost so far suggests that "a one- to two-year interval will be more realistic," he said. He predicted that in the long run the cost of maintaining the project would be far higher than originally estimated.

"**Beach** replenishment per se is not a bad thing," he said. "But it is very costly and very temporary." Moreover, he said, people should recognize that the projects protect buildings, not **beaches**. Professor Pilkey said the owners of buildings threatened by erosion should move them inland or pay the cost of defending them themselves.

One thing everyone agrees on -- even Professors Dean and Pilkey -- is that more must be done to monitor **beach nourishment** projects once they are complete.

"Monitoring has to be the answer," Professor Dean said. "We have to agree on predetermined indices of what constitutes a failure or a success."

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# SACRAMENTO Business Journal

Sacramento Business Journal (California)

February 19, 2007 Monday

**LENGTH:** 813 words

**HEADLINE:** Leveraging levees;  
Property owners will be asked to pay for one-tenth the cost

**BYLINE:** Celia Lamb

**BODY:**

A campaign starts Monday to persuade property owners to dig deeper in their pockets and pull out almost \$250 million to reduce the risk that local rivers would reclaim old floodplains and send hundreds of thousands of the region's residents racing for their rooftops.

The **Sacramento** Area **Flood** Control Agency estimates **levee** improvements and Folsom Dam upgrades over 30 years will cost \$2.7 billion, and provide 200-year **flood** protection, greatly lowering the risk of a massive **flood** in the region. But first the agency must win a vote by 138,000 property owners.

The larger the approval rate by property owners, the greater the chance to gain federal and state funding for the **levee**-improvement projects, said Michael Perri, campaign director for Citizens for **Flood** Safety.

"It's clear **Sacramento** cannot afford this by itself," said Jonas Minton, the water policy adviser for the Planning and Conservation League and former deputy director of the state Department of Water Resources. "The advantage of the assessment is it gets leveraged about 10-to-1."

Local assessments sought by SAFCA would cover \$246.5 million over 30 years. The city of Folsom would kick in \$44.5 million. SAFCA officials are counting on federal and state funding for the remaining \$2.4 billion.

In November, voters approved propositions 1E and 84, authorizing \$4.9 billion for **flood**-control improvements statewide. About \$300 million is earmarked for the **Sacramento** region, but none of the funds have been allocated, Minton said.

SAFCA already has cost-sharing approvals from the state on some of its projects, but it lacks federal and state authorization for Natomas **levee** work that agency officials hope to start this summer.

Traditionally, the federal government funds 70 percent of **flood**-control projects. President Bush's budget proposal includes \$66 million for **Sacramento**-area **flood** projects, about one-third of the \$172.8 million SAFCA wants.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed budget also includes \$46.3 million for raising Folsom Dam, reducing the risk of overflowing streams in south **Sacramento** and reimbursing SAFCA for completed **levee** improvements in Natomas.

The **Sacramento** region will face competition for state money from many other communities -- including Stockton, Marysville, Yuba City and the entire **Sacramento**-San Joaquin River Delta, Minton said.

Early estimates put the cost of **flood**-control improvements at \$12 billion statewide. There simply won't be enough money to fill everybody's needs.

On March 2, SAFCA will mail ballots to property owners in **flood**-risk areas in **Sacramento** and Sutter counties asking them to approve a new assessment district that runs from Sutter County to the Pocket and along the American River to Fair Oaks.

An assessment is different from a tax under state law, but the charge would be included on property tax bills mailed out by Oct. 31.

SAFCA has designated eight "benefit zones," with varying fees, inside the proposed assessment district. A district-wide ballot count would determine whether the assessment is approved.

Although only majority approval is needed to create the district, the votes are weighted according to the assessments each property owner would pay. A big industrial property owner will have a much greater voice in the fate of the assessment than a single-family homeowner.

The value of each assessment is calculated according to the **flood** risk for each property. Four commercial building owners in a zone covering the northern part of the Natomas Basin in **Sacramento** and southern Sutter counties would pay \$479 per 1,000 square feet, the highest average cost.

Owners of two-story homes would pay more than their neighbors with single-story residences, except in an odd-shaped area of south **Sacramento** east of Union Pacific railroad tracks. In that zone, owners of two-story-homes would pay \$33 per year, the lowest assessment in the district.

SAFCA would issue three bonds: \$113 million this year, \$40 million in 2011, and \$44 million in 2014. Initially, the assessments would bring in about \$18.1 million. Annual increases of about \$200,000 per year from new development would help pay **levee** maintenance costs.

If everything moves on schedule, the **flood** project would be completed by 2018, and the assessments would pay off the bonds by 2037.

#### What if **Sacramento** floods?

In 2005, the state Water Resources Department analyzed the likely effect of **levee** failures along the east bank of the **Sacramento** River in Natomas and the Pocket and the American River near **Sacramento** State. The **flood** would cover 102 square miles Average **flood** depth: 11 feet 100 to 500 deaths 230,000 residents displaced from their homes for an average of 10 months \$11.2 billion in property damage \$1.5 billion in temporary housing and other displacement costs Four hospitals, 65 schools, 12 fire stations and three airports would be flooded.

March 20, 2007 Tuesday 4:08 AM EST

**LENGTH:** 377 words

**HEADLINE:** REP. MATSUI ANNOUNCES RECORD FUNDING IN ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS FUNDING FOR **SACRAMENTO** REGION

**BYLINE:** US Fed News

**DATELINE:** WASHINGTON

**BODY:**

Rep. Doris O. Matsui, D-Calif. (5th CD), issued the following press release:

Today, Rep. Doris O. Matsui announced that **Sacramento** will receive over \$110 million dollars in FY07 funding for **Flood** Protection and other Army Corps of Engineers related projects.

"This is important funding for **Sacramento** and our region," said Matsui. "We have made enormous progress on the work to our **levees and flood** protection infrastructure this past year."

Because Congress did not pass a majority of their appropriation bills before the mid term elections last November, Congressional Leadership declared a continuing resolution for the entire year. The decision left the future of many **flood** protection projects in doubt. Today's announcement puts some definition on the Army Corps budget priorities in **Sacramento** as well as across the country.

Matsui, who has made **flood** protection her number one priority since being elected to Congress, worked closely with Administration officials, including Assistant Secretary of Civil Works John Paul Woodley, in securing the funding.

"**Sacramento flood** protection is an on-going process. We cannot take a year off from funding these important projects. It is important that we have consistent funding at responsible levels. I made that clear to the Corps in my discussions with them," Matsui said.

Funding highlights from the CR include:

\* \$12.5 million for South **Sacramento** County Streams, which when finished will provide at least 100-year protection to over 100,000 residents and property valued at over \$7 billion.

\* \$76.6 million for American River Watershed projects, including \$48.7 million for building a new bridge below Folsom Dam. Widespread flooding along the American River would cover approximately 86 square miles of the developed **Sacramento** area, affecting 330,000 people and \$16 billion in property. These improvements will provide 200-year **flood** protection.

\* \$21 million for the **Sacramento** River Bank Protection project. The latest report from the Corps identified almost 200 erosion sites in need of repair. 1 million acres and 2.3 million Californians are protected by these **levees**.

"Securing this funding puts FY 07 behind us and allows us to focus on the work we need to do for FY 08," Matsui said.

<http://www.csc.noaa.gov/beachnourishment/html/human/dialog/series1a.htm>

## ***Beach Nourishment: Is It Worth The Cost? - Perspective***

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by Orrin H. Pilkey and Andy Coburn

Beach nourishment, the emplacement of sediment along an eroding shoreline, is a coastal engineering practice that attempts to artificially stabilize a naturally migrating shoreline. Although beach nourishment projects are intended to hold the shoreline in place and protect beachfront property, it is important to note that there is no need to protect the beach per se, which absent the trappings of man, will always be present.

Beach nourishment is hyped by well-funded and politically-savvy coalitions of special interest groups, oceanfront property owners, coastal engineers, and lobbyists as a way to "preserve" or "restore" our beaches, and sold to the public under the guise of "creating healthy beaches." When it comes to beach nourishment, the bottom line is money. Shorelines are only nourished to protect investment properties and the local tourist industry: the status quo. It is, therefore, disingenuous when nourishment proponents say they are concerned with a public interest and wish to improve the recreational value of our ocean beaches.

From an inequitable distribution of costs and benefits to the irreversible destruction of coastal habitats, the myriad of issues, problems, and benefits associated with artificially stabilizing our nation's beaches through beach nourishment must be openly addressed through a societal debate.

### **Why Do We Nourish Our Beaches?**

A retreating shoreline without buildings is not a problem. A retreating shoreline with buildings is an erosion problem. Since buildings are clearly the cause, should public funds be used to solve a problem created by affluent beachfront property owners irresponsible enough to build next to an eroding shoreline? We say no. Let the buildings fall in or, even better, move them back or demolish them and the beach will be as wide and as useable as ever. And it will have a healthy ecosystem. Of course, there will always be those who claim to be unaware that an erosion problem existed and expect that the government should step in. Unless they have been living in Timbuktu, however, such ignorance stretches the limits of credibility.

So why does the public pay for beach nourishment to protect and enhance the value of property owned by the very people who caused the beach degradation problem to begin with? Nourishment proponents, when faced with this question, usually respond that the public wants a hot dog stand, motels, miniature gulf courses etc. and therefore to protect them is to protect the public interest. This is nonsense. The hot dog stand and other interests on the first row will quickly reappear in the second row if eroded away; the American free-enterprise system assures that.

The true public interest for the vast majority of beach users is a beautiful beach, with a natural ecosystem to promote fishing and natural sand to promote beach strolling, all unencumbered by seawalls and buildings immediately adjacent to high tide lines and unencumbered by taxpayer costs to nourish the beach. While it may be too late for this on many developed beaches, we must not confuse the interests of beachfront property owners with those of the vast majority of Americans.

### **Who Should Pay?**

Much publicity has been given to the takings issue in recent years, but there is also a "givings" issue. Beach nourishment projects, the majority of which are funded by taxpayers living in Memphis, Toledo, Phoenix

and other non-coastal cities and towns, greatly increase the value of beachfront property. According to one media report, property values increased an average of \$250,000 as a direct result of a beach nourishment project in Westhampton Dunes on the South Shore of Long Island, NY. The city of Long Branch, NJ is in the midst of a large-scale redevelopment project that includes over \$100 million in new beachfront development. According to the town's administrator, this redevelopment is a direct result of a 1998 federal beach nourishment project. In Sandbridge, VA, oceanfront property values increased an average of 14% in one year because of nourishment.

Just as important as who benefits from beach nourishment is the question of who pays, or who should pay? The answer to the former is we all do. Considering the enormous benefits that accrue to oceanfront property owners, the answer to the latter is clearly they should.

### **Increased Rates of Renourishment**

Because of the rising sea level and diminishing supplies of sand, the future of the American shoreline is one of ever increasing erosion rates. As a result, we can anticipate two very important events in the future of beach nourishment that must be a part of the societal debate we are championing:

- As sea level continues to rise, other things being equal, the rate of renourishment will increase because a rise in sea level will increase the rate of erosion of nourished beaches. This is already apparent in a national beach nourishment survey that we are completing and have published on our website (<http://www.env.duke.edu/psds>);
- Artificially holding the shoreline in place, whether by beach nourishment or seawalls, usually causes the shoreface to steepen, which will also cause shoreline erosion rates to increase.

### **Increased Density of Development Due to Nourishment**

As rates of renourishment increase, the density of development will also continue to increase. Single family units will become multi-family units which will eventually become high rises along most American barrier island shorelines. This is taking place right now in North Carolina in Atlantic Beach, Carolina Beach, Nags Head and Kill Devil Hills, and in South Carolina in Garden City and Folly Beach. In fact, it is occurring on virtually all barrier island fronts on the US East Coast with the exception of some very exclusive private islands such as Figure 8 Island, NC, and Little Cumberland Island, GA.

Some argue that beach nourishment is not responsible for increases in the density of development, but it is. If nourishment is not carried out and a shoreline is left to naturally retreat up to buildings, one can be certain that the density of development will not increase because beaches in a high state of erosion are not attractive places to develop. Development in Carolina Beach, NC dramatically changed from single family to multi-family structures almost immediately after a federal beach nourishment project in 1982. This "progress" was attributed in the media and by the local Corps district to the newly nourished beach.

Proponents of beach nourishment frequently point out that the increase in density of development along Miami Beach came as a result of nourishment, and that it has brought considerable economic progress to the community. This is true. But is it responsible to promote this kind of economic progress along eroding shorelines? Is it responsible to lock the public into perpetual payment for beach nourishment and other forms of hard stabilization that will be needed to protect this development? Is this even the type of development favored by most beach visitors? The answer to all three questions is an unequivocal no. So why not put the high rises at the back of the island or, better yet, on the mainland?

The point is that even if the change in the density of development is simply a straight line increase, this increase would not have occurred without nourishment.

Among the other problems related to increasing density of development are:

- More people and property at danger from the "big one" and
- Reduction in the flexibility of response to an eroding shoreline. Erosion responses available to a beach lined with high-rises are highly limited when compared to a beach cottage community.

This problem will only get rapidly worse unless zoning requirements become a part of the beach nourishment permitting process. Is it not reasonable to require that no change in the density of development be allowed for the first two to four rows of a beach community where a beach is nourished with public funds? We paid for the beach and it does, after all, belong to all people.

### **Access to the Beach**

All beaches funded in part by the federal government are supposed to have public access complete with parking. Initially, this requirement was strictly enforced. Miami Beach, for example, which was nourished in 1979, has ample access paths and parking, but the system has recently broken down. Sea Bright, New Jersey has almost no access and parking in spite of the fact that it is part of the largest and most costly beach nourishment project in the nation's history. The entire Northern New Jersey nourishment project, in fact, has little access in spite of (or perhaps because of) its close proximity to millions of people in the New York City metropolitan area. In Pine Knoll Shores, North Carolina, where a loan from the US Department of Agriculture funded construction of the current beach, there is negligible public access. On Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, public access and public parking are scarce for day visitors. No one is minding the store for the Corps of Engineers on a national level, and it appears that districts are free to restrict access as much as they possibly can on an individual project basis.

### **What the Public Should Know about Beach Nourishment**

There are several principles, valid for all beach nourishment projects, of which the public is frequently not made aware:

- Almost, without exception, nourished beaches disappear faster than natural beaches (2 to 12 times faster by our estimate);
- Nourished beaches recover poorly after storms compared to natural beaches;
- Because they erode faster, nourished beaches almost always have scarps, or small vertical cliffs, that serve as barriers to nesting sea turtles and are dangerous to beach users. The New Jersey governor recently broke his leg after falling from a four-foot scarp on a nourished beach;
- The predicted cost of federal beach nourishment projects are almost always underestimated, which produces questionable cost/benefit ratios;
- Along many reaches of American shoreline, economically feasible sand supplies available for nourishment are minimal or non-existent. As a result, we can anticipate that the cost of sand will increase dramatically;
- Both Corps and consultant engineers use predictive mathematical models that simply can not predict the lifespan of nourished beaches. Nature, at the shoreline, is far too complex to be duplicated by mere mathematical models. Despite the fact that engineering models such as GENESIS and SBEACH lack validity – as has been pointed out in the scientific literature – their use continues unabated;
- The design of beach nourishment projects is highly subjective and in the hands of the US Army Corps of Engineers, who benefits from constructing beach stabilization projects, and private consultants who must find the truth according to their clients' needs in order to survive professionally. Although public comment is allowed for federal projects, it is often nothing more than lip service and an exercise in futility (unless a congressman is involved).

### **What is a Healthy Beach?**

A healthy beach, as defined by nourishment proponents, is a wide beach; but there is much more to a healthy beach than that. A beach is a complex and diverse ecosystem upon which a huge variety of

organisms – from seabirds to fish to crabs to microscopic meiofauna that live between sand grains – rely for their survival. Two recent beach nourishment projects in North Carolina, one in Pine Knoll Shores and one in Oak Island, clearly indicate that a number of parameters must be considered before a beach can be described as "healthy." These beaches were constructed of such poor quality sediment that the ability of each to serve as suitable sea turtle nesting habitat is now in serious doubt. Ironically, Oak Island was the first beach nourishment project in the nation to be funded and constructed for the sole purpose of restoring sea turtle nesting habitat. In spite of current and potential long-term environmental impacts, and notwithstanding the significant reduction in recreational values attributable to these projects, declarations by local community leaders and by the commander of the local Corps district to the effect that the rock-covered beach was a high-quality one, are characteristic of the juggernaut that our national beach nourishment program has become.

While some localized studies indicate that the biology of nourished beaches may partially recover in months to years, there is no evidence to prove that repeatedly nourished beaches will not, in some way, result in significant long-term environmental impacts. Just as the Corps couldn't anticipate the detrimental cumulative impacts of altering the Florida Everglades for human benefit, we are unable to predict the long-term, cumulative impacts of beach nourishment.

### **What's Good About Beach Nourishment**

Nourishment widens beaches and, providing the sand is of high quality, provides recreational opportunities on beaches that have narrowed up against buildings and seawalls. Nourishment is far superior to the seawall option which, although it may partially protect buildings, will destroy the beach over time. Finally, public access is – in theory at least – required when federal funds are expended to build a beach.

In addition, a widened beach is a strong buffer against storms. The upper part of the beach (the berm) absorbs the impact of waves and, to some extent, provides protection from the elevated water levels of a storm surge. In a few cases, sand eroded from nourished beaches moves to an adjacent shoreline and widens that beach.

It is important to note that nourished beaches will not entirely prevent storm damage, nor will they do much to mitigate storm wind damage. They also will not prevent massive destruction associated with the arrival of the "perfect" storm from the "right" direction and with the "right" duration and intensity.

### **The Future**

Do we have the money and desire to nourish all the beaches along the east and Gulf coasts? The answer depends on the priorities of our society. But it is very likely that taxpayers, as a whole, will strongly resist funding beach nourishment projects when the folks responsible for the erosion problem, beachfront property owners, are paying so little. A public understanding of this discrepancy is creeping into the editorial pages of most local and regional newspapers. For those beaches that are nourished, we offer the following predictions about the future of our shorelines:

- Nourishment will continue but at ever higher costs due to sea level rise and the scarcity of sand;
- The national cost, in a decade or two, will approach a billion dollars per year, including the Pacific coast;
- The federal share will decrease (an attempt to do this was made by the last two administrations) and costs will be deemed prohibitive for local governments;
- State shares will also decrease in response to a public educated about the real cause of the erosion problem;
- In a few instances, buildings will be moved back or demolished and nourishment will be viewed as a means to fine tune the retreat from the shoreline; and
- Seawalls will become the preferred solution, and the beaches in front of them will disappear.

The specific rate at which these events will take place will vary widely from place to place and depend on sea level rise, but they almost assuredly will happen over the next two to four generations. Surely we owe our grandchildren a debate on this topic.

### **Do We Have a Plan?**

The environmental, economic, and social costs of nourishing all American beaches is impossibly high, but this is the direction in which we are heading. At present, almost all developed beaches in Florida are being nourished, are in the nourishment planning pipeline, or are actively being considered for nourishment.

There are substantial geological and oceanographic reasons why nourishment is more feasible on some beaches than others, and if we must nourish some beaches, there is a need to prioritize the process. For example, nourished beaches with high wave energy and/or high natural erosion rates are poor candidates for nourishment. Availability of a sand supply for years to come should also be a factor. As it stands now, beach nourishment is a highly political phenomenon, carried out on an ad-hoc or crisis basis. Communities with political clout or in particularly active Corps districts bring home the bacon (federal funding for a beach nourishment project). Planning in any context other than political is totally absent.

### **Conclusion**

The sea level is rising and there is a significant chance this rise will accelerate. This is perhaps the first major global impact of the greenhouse effect, and it is important that we respond in a sensible fashion with a long-term viewpoint, not simply defend the status quo. The American beach nourishment program is decidedly an approach to defend the status quo.

Things on the shoreline are not going to be the same, two to three generations from now. With a rising sea level impacting on the most dynamic surficial features on Earth (barrier islands), trouble is just around the corner. There is a significant chance that recreational beaches and beachfront property will become a low priority relative to the preservation of our major coastal cities such as Manhattan, Boston, and Miami. To our knowledge, however, not a single state has entered a societal debate to explore all sides of the issue, to look at long term feasibility of nourishment in a time of rising sea level, and to determine which communities and beaches need nourishment and to establish guidelines for determining this.

We feel it is essential that the long term – several generations – be taken into account when debating funding a beach nourishment project. The reason for this is that, in actual fact, once a beach has been nourished in our system, there is a very high probability that it will continue to be nourished over and over. Like seawalls, once a beach is nourished, it will always be nourished. We should not take this first step until we know where it all leads down the road. The public must be given a thorough and straightforward analysis of environmental impacts and long-term costs and consider the issue of who should pay. We need a societal debate, carried out on a level playing field, regarding the future of beach nourishment in America.

E-mail from COE Liasion, 05/08/2007

Hendrik - Here is the information that you requested.

SAC BANK

FY 06: 33 Critical sites were identified. The Sacramento District repaired 15 of these sites using \$6.3 million in the budget and \$23.3 million in the supplemental and \$33.85 million from the state. This funding will be used for FY 07 work. The state repaired the other 18 sites.

FY 07: An additional 24 Sites were identified. Sacramento District is in the process of repairing 14 of these sites. The \$21 million in this year's budget will be used to repair these sites. \$30 million of State money was used in the fall to begin these repairs and the Federal funds will be used this summer to complete the work. The State is repairing the other 10 sites.

FY 08: The President's budget is \$21,528,000. Sacramento District will be using this to repair the most urgent sites. We estimate that approximately 3,000 linear feet will be repaired.

OTHER CRITICAL NEEDS - SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN AREA

Here is the list of projects that provide protection to the City of Sacramento and surrounding area that are considered to be critical projects.

We are showing the FY 08 President's budget and the Capability

		PRES	CAP
American River Common Features	\$12.0		\$34.8
Folsom Modification (JFP)		\$ 6.0	\$ 6.0
Folsom Dam Raise (PAC)	\$18.5		\$19.0
South Sacramento County Streams	\$ 8.0		\$11.0

The goal is to reduce the flood risk to this area to about 1/200 chance in a given year once these projects are complete.

I hope this meets your needs.

Stacey E. Brown  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
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The eScholarship Editions project at the California Digital Library

### **Imperial Beach Erosion**

Erosion at Imperial Beach has been an increasing problem since 1953, even during the drought periods preceding the recent floods of 1978 to 1980. It was during this earlier dry period that sand became unavailable to the beaches because dams had been built on the Tijuana River Basin. Inman (1976) indicates that approximately 660,000 yards of sand per year would have normally reached the beach, if not entrapped by these dams. As it actually happened, however, the beach had to be artificially nourished by dredging. Between 1945 and 1967, this sediment had moved north from Imperial Beach to the Zuniga Shoal area, indicating a predominantly south-to-north longshore current during this period (fig. 98).

By contrast, weekly observations made by Shepard (1950) for about a year in the late 1940s showed a more variable direction of the current. At the south end of the beach, the currents were predominantly south to north, while in the northern portion, they were largely north to south, with the exception of an intermediate point at the northernmost station. Shepard also found that currents near Zuniga Jetty were more commonly south to north in the summer (fig. 3) and north to south in winter, as would be expected from the wind direction during the varying seasons. The cutting away in recent years of the broad beach at the condominium apartments may indicate yet another change in direction of the current. During the early part of the winter of 1983, the beaches south of the border were severely eroded, and the sediment apparently moved north, accreting in the Imperial Beach area. Since construction of the Rodrequis Flood Control Dam on the Tijuana River in Mexico, the beach cliff has eroded markedly for at least three miles south of the border, and all construction along the shore, including the highway, is disappearing as this is written (fig. 99). It is obvious that the currents in the area are quite complicated.

For some time there has been much discussion about cutting another entrance into San Diego Bay, near the south end, so as to have a second channel

to the sea in case the main entrance becomes blocked by earthquakes or military activity. This also would give access to boats from the south. One of the difficulties with the second entrance idea is that it would probably decrease the tidal current at the main entrance, which would result in deposition such that dredging would become necessary. Before constructing a second entrance, Imperial Beach should consider the various marinas being maintained along the coast: these all require jetties that have considerable influence on sediment transport.

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The Hill  
July 6, 2004

## **Marlowe & Co.: 'We know beaches'** **Howard Marlowe is K Street's man on the waterfront**

By Jim Snyder

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Sand has proved to be solid ground for Howard Marlowe's lobbying shop. Marlowe built his firm around one thing: restoring beaches.

In the early '90s, Marlowe & Co. helped to win a \$13 million earmark to "renourish" the shoreline in Venice, Fla., and, since then, the five-man operation has worked to rebuild shorelines from North Carolina down to Florida and over to Hawaii.

"We know beaches," said Marlowe, a native New Yorker who now says he can size up whether a beach is healthy or not with just a glance.

Unlike the beaches themselves, the beach-renourishment business shows no sign of eroding — to the chagrin of spending-watchdog groups.

Marlowe & Co. — which began in 1984 as a one-man shop that lobbied for basic infrastructure needs of small to midsize cities — made more than \$700,000 last year representing more than 30 coastal communities clamoring to save a vital economic resource.

The firm estimates that it has won more than \$100 million in federal money for beach projects so far.

Spending millions on beaches destined to be washed away has struck both the Clinton and Bush administrations as not smart. But Congress keeps dumping millions on projects that the government could be paying for over the next 50 years.

The House energy and water appropriations bill, for instance, would increase beach-renourishment projects in the Corps of Engineers' 2005 budget by \$21 million — for a total of just under \$100 million. The Corps manages the beach accounts, which are the fastest growing part of its budget — although they account for just a fraction of the total (around 6 percent). Under the funding formula, the federal government pays 65 percent of the costs, with state and local entities picking up the rest.

If you have a beach losing its sand, the budget increases that Congress typically provides are as welcome as rich retirees.

"The economy goes down the drain if we don't have a healthy, wide and accessible beach," said Greg Rudolph, the shore-protection manager for North Carolina's Carteret County, which has nearly 100 miles of shoreline to protect.

The county hired Marlowe in 2001. For communities, the \$2,000-a-month fee can be a hard swallow. Marlowe said he spent a year courting Venice.

But the fees can be a pittance compared to what can come in. Last year, Marlowe helped Carteret County win a \$3 million earmark for a dredging project and \$400,000 for an initial study of a shoreline-restoration project.

"He knows how to get the money and what to do with it after it's received by Corps," Rudolph said of Marlowe.

With a voice that seems always on the edge of cracking, Marlowe looks and acts more like the economist he used to be than the lobbyist he is. He graduated from the Wharton business school at the University of Pennsylvania with a bachelor's degree in economics. He has a law degree from New York University.

Before getting into the beach business, Marlowe worked as an energy analyst and spent four years on the Hill in the early 1970s. He also served two terms as the president of the American League of Lobbyists.

But it's the beach business where Marlowe has earned his reputation — although his firm still lobbies for other infrastructure earmarks and he and his wife prefer to vacation in the mountains.

He founded the American Coastal Coalition, a group of coastal communities, and later merged it with the 75-year-old American Shore and Beach Preservation Association, which remains a client.

He also was instrumental in forming the House Coastal Caucus, which has become a powerful legislative group.

Like any good lobbyist, Marlowe is quick to give credit to the delegations he works with that actually secure the earmarks.

"We're extra staff for those members of Congress. We're extra staff for our clients who can't keep track of what is going on. We're extra staff for the [Corps]," he said.

It doesn't hurt when you are looking for dollars, of course, that House Appropriations Committee Chairman C.W. "Bill" Young's (R) district includes miles of shoreline. Pinellas County, which encompasses Florida's 10th District, is among the top recipients of federal beach funds each year.

According to an analysis by Taxpayers for Common Sense, a government-spending watchdog group, 14 beach projects in Florida got no funding in the budget submitted by President Bush but received \$18 million in the House spending measure.

Lawmakers say they rely on Marlowe and his firm to help make the case to their colleagues with constituents lucky just to visit the beach once a year.

"Howard is very, very instrumental to maintaining relationships with the communities and members of Congress," said Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.), whose district includes Carteret County. "This is his job every day. We have other issues. This is his issue."

To critics, beach lobbying is the epitome of government waste. The projects for which Marlowe is lobbying will wash away eventually, but taxpayers could be paying the bill for decades.

"For the most part, these projects aren't sustainable," said Steve Ellis, a vice president for policy at Taxpayers for Common Sense. "They are fighting a losing battle against Mother Nature. Erosion happens."

Ellis's group estimates that the 103 beach projects now authorized or under consideration could cost taxpayers more than \$10 billion. When the Corps funds a project, the federal government agrees to pay to renourish the beach for the next 50 years, although appropriators still would need to approve any future spending.

Ellis told a House panel in March 2002 that the beach budget had ballooned by 60 percent in the previous three years, even though both Clinton and Bush targeted beach funding for cuts.

Environmentalists say the beach money pays to develop areas that should be left to wildlife.

But supporters say the money is well-spent.

“It’s an economic issue,” Jones said. “If you don’t have beaches, you don’t have tourism.”

Jones said that for every \$1 the government spends, it generates \$1.40 for the economy.

Marlowe, who said that the federal government gets the bulk of the benefit through tax revenues that beaches generate, added that, relatively speaking, shoreline-restoration money is a drop in the bucket — a “rounding error” on a highway project, in his words.

The budget for the Joint Strike Fighter, for example, is roughly 40 times higher than the beach budget.

For Marlowe, whether a beach should get federal support comes down to this: “Can Marlowe get out of his car, walk to the beach and enjoy himself for a day?”

Critics of beach projects are “trying to take away my beach,” he said. “They are trying to take away public recreation.”

Beach lobbying, it turns out, isn’t all just a day at the beach. Despite the increase over the president’s request, the House’s shoreline budget would still be 15 percent lower than what was appropriated this year. One project left wanting: a \$3 million proposal to renourish the Venice beach that gave Marlowe his start. Marlowe said that if the money is not appropriated, it would be the first time that the government didn’t keep its funding commitment for a beach project that it had approved earlier.

“If Congress does not fund its commitments on periodic renourishment, it seriously harms the federal program to keep the most seriously eroded parts of our coastline in restored condition,” he said.