

Tauscher Condemns President Bush's Veto of Water Resources Development Act; Vows to Override

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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November 2, 2007

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"Democrats listen to the American people and share their priorities."

Washington, DC — Rep. Ellen Tauscher, the senior Northern Californian on the House Transportation Infrastructure Committee, today criticized President Bush for vetoing the Water Resources Development Act, which her committee wrote. The legislation authorizes funds for water resources studies and construction projects by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers important to communities across the country, including several in the Bay Area. The bill passed the House and Senate by overwhelming margins.

Rep. Tauscher was a member of the conference that negotiated the final legislation before sending it to the President. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) have both said the House and Senate will hold override votes next week.

Rep. Ellen Tauscher released the following statement.

"It is appalling that the President can only find his veto pen when it comes to legislation that represents the domestic priorities of the American people and the communities we live in. This is an investment in modernizing our ports, providing clean drinking water, easing water and flood concerns, and improving our environment. This legislation is vital to California, the Bay Area, and the Delta. I am confident the House will override this veto because we listen to the American people and share their priorities."

Rep. Ellen O. Tauscher

The legislation includes various projects that Rep. Tauscher fought for to address the concerns of the Bay Area. These projects include,

San Francisco Bay, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Beneficial Reuse of Dredged Materials Study: the Army Corps shall conduct a study to determine the feasibility of the beneficial use of dredged material from the San Francisco Bay, along the Carquinez Strait, in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, including the benefits and impacts of salinity in the Delta and the benefits to navigation, flood damage reduction, ecosystem restoration, water quality, salinity control, water supply reliability, and recreation.

Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Projects: these projects will provide both flood control and environmental restoration.

Lower Walnut Creek Channel Project -- The project is located on Walnut Creek and the lower reaches of its principal tributaries in Contra Costa County. The Walnut Creek Project includes approximately 22 miles of channel improvements consisting of channel enlargement, channel stabilization, and levees along Walnut Creek and the lower reaches of San Ramon and Las Trampas Creeks, channel improvement of Pine and Galindo Creeks and backwater levees on Lower Grayson and Pacheco Creeks. The current project provides flood protection to residential, commercial and agricultural lands within the urban and suburban areas of Walnut Creek, Concord, Pacheco, and Pleasant Hill. The reevaluation will consider the addition of Ecosystem Restoration objectives to the project.

Grayson/Murder's Creek Project -- The study is located in and around the city of Pleasant Hill in Contra Costa County. The study area has a population of over 400,000 and serves as a commercial and industrial center. As a result of continued rapid urbanization, much of the upper Walnut Creek Basin is experiencing flood and drainage problems outside of the existing flood control projects, and several tributary channels are inadequate to handle increased flood flows. Flooding in 1982 and 1983 caused about \$18 million in damages to unprotected areas of the Walnut Creek Basin. Subsequent flooding in 1997 also inundated residences in the city of Pleasant Hill.

Contra Costa Canal and Mallard Slough Projects: Contra Costa Canal is located in Contra Costa County and is operated by the Contra Costa Water District. This canal provides water for municipal, industrial, and agricultural purposes. A section of the canal is at risk of overtopping and flooding the adjacent agricultural, residential, and commercial properties. The authorization will allow the Corps, working with the Contra Costa Water District to proceed with a feasibility study.

East Bay Municipal Utilities District Recycled Water Program -- the legislation provides a \$30,000,000 authorization for the development of a feasibility study and subsequent construction of a water production facility to provide a highly treated water supply for industrial production activities in Richmond, California. Once constructed, the project would provide 3 million gallons per day of water limiting demands on limited potable water supplies while protecting the supply of such waters for in-stream flows for fisheries and wildlife. The project would also provide benefits beyond the service area of EBMUD by providing a model for other regions to develop facilities that develop water supplies tailored for specialized industrial processes and in turn reduce demand on limited potable water supplies.

Bay Area Regional Desalination Project -- the legislation provides a \$4,000,000 authorization to assist the San Francisco Bay area in developing and constructing a regional desalination production facility. The authorization would allow the interested regional partners to begin the process of exploring the feasibility of developing such a project. Currently, this partnership consists of the Contra Costa Water District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, and Santa Clara Valley Water District -- the four major water suppliers that provide water to the entire region.

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