

2/17/88

FLOOD CONTROL FOR THE SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN AREA

Statement of Principles  
by  
Sacramento Area Elected Officials

AUBURN DAM/AMERICAN RIVER

1) Construction of a flood control only dam, built by the Army Corps of Engineers (COE):

a) Dam enlargeable (if) future water and power beneficiaries can be identified to pay the extra cost for retrofit;

b) Sunk costs of the federal government to be set aside and paid by future beneficiaries if dam ever enlarged.

✓2) Folsom-South Canal deauthorized.

✓3) National Recreation Area established on the upper American River to include the area immediately upstream of a dam.

4) Various structural and operational changes at Folsom Dam and Reservoir:

✓ a) Current 500,000 acre feet of flood control space keep in Folsom Reservoir as an interim measure, with flood control space increased as an emergency measure, if necessary;

b) COE to study permanent amount of flood control space in Folsom Reservoir;

✓ c) COE to study lowering of the spillway gates at Folsom Dam for improved flood control management.

5) American River levees improved.

6) Study of future water supply needs for the Sacramento area.

NATOMAS AREA & DRY CREEK/ARCADE CREEK AREA

7) Flood protection for the entire Natomas area as an ultimate goal. As an interim measure, the immediate construction of a cross levee from the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal to the Sacramento River, and improvements to the levees surrounding the area south of the cross levee.

8) As a joint and concurrent project with the Natomas area, the construction and improvement of levees and drains in the Dry Creek and Arcade Creek areas.

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The storms of February, 1986, highlighted the need for more flood protection in the Sacramento Metropolitan area. While most of the levees and flood drains withstood the heavy rains, we have since learned that there are major weaknesses in our flood control defenses.

Recent studies by all levels of government have shown the need for a high level of flood protection for the Sacramento area. It is in the best interests of this area to obtain additional flood protection that is affordable, environmentally sound and a benefit to the American River, American River Parkway and the waterways in North Sacramento.

AUBURN DAM/AMERICAN RIVER

Extensive cost analyses have clearly shown that a multiple-purpose Auburn Dam would cost more than the water and power benefits it would provide. There are simply no agencies willing to pay the high costs of water or power from a multiple-purpose structure. Instead, flood protection for the American River watershed should include:

A flood control only dam built by the Corps of Engineers at or near the Auburn Dam site.

The structure should have a permanently open "hole" at the bottom to allow normal flows to pass through. The dam should be designed to minimize flooding of the canyon, drain fast enough to minimize impacts on vegetation and drain slowly enough to minimize soil slippage.

Under the original authorization of Auburn Dam, all of the flood control costs of the large Auburn Dam would have been paid by the federal government with no contribution by state or local interests. The new federal cost sharing plans require a 25 percent nonfederal contribution. It is our intent to propose to Congress that the nonfederal entities share future flood control costs, but not the past costs. Past costs allocated to water and power would be set aside to be repaid to the federal government with interest if the dam is enlarged in the future to develop water and power.

The design of the dam should not preclude future enlargement if there are water and power agencies willing to pay the total direct and indirect costs of including enlargement provisions. The costs of enlargement should be paid for by those who would benefit from an enlarged dam. Future enlargement of the dam would require new authorization by Congress to assure both repayment of past federal costs and new local approval.

**The deauthorization of Folsom-South Canal.**

In order to protect flows in the lower American River and water quality in the Delta, and to provide adequate future water supplies for the Sacramento area, it is necessary to deauthorize the extension of the Folsom-South Canal.

As a replacement of American River water, we support efforts by the state and federal governments to provide areas outside of the county with alternative water supplies. This would include water from New Melones Reservoir for San Joaquin County and water from the Delta for the East Bay Municipal Utility District.

The establishment of a National Recreation Area on the upper American River to include the area immediately upstream of a flood control only Auburn Dam.

The recreation area would be an extension of the American River Parkway/Nimbus-Folsom recreation complex, and should extend at least to Iowa Hill Bridge on the North Fork and Oxbow Reservoir on the Middle Fork. A hiking and (possibly) a bicycle trail system would connect with the NRA through a lighted walking tunnel at the base of the dam. The recreation area would provide significant recreational opportunities for Placer and El Dorado counties and for the region as a whole.

**The further study of various structural and operational changes of Folsom Dam and Reservoir.**

As an important interim measure, the Bureau of Reclamation should keep at least the current 500,000 acre feet of flood control space in Folsom Reservoir, which is 100,000 acre feet more than the authorized level. If it is determined that more flood space in Folsom is needed on a temporary basis to provide areas of Sacramento with 100-year flood protection, then it may be necessary to increase flood storage even further.

The Corps of Engineers should study what amount of flood control space -- from 500,000 to 300,000 acre feet -- should remain in Folsom Reservoir on a more permanent basis. The Corps should also give serious consideration to lowering the spillway gates at Folsom Dam for improved flood control management.

**Improvements along the American River levees.**

Where needed, improvements should include levee stabilization to prevent water moving through the levees and causing failure. Some levees should be raised to eliminate low spots where failure might occur. Improvements should also include "hidden" bank protection along the river to protect the banks (and, eventually, the levees) from the normal cutting force of the river.

The Corps' feasibility study shows that extensive rip rap along the American River would be needed for the levees to withstand a much higher flow of water. While some rip rap may be needed to improve the levees, extensive rip rap that would cause

environmental and aesthetic damage to the American River Parkway is not acceptable.

#### **Future water supplies for the Sacramento area.**

The state Department of Water Resources' recent report on Auburn Dam concludes that Folsom Dam will meet the water needs of the Sacramento area and the lower American River until at least 2020, assuming the Folsom-South Canal is not extended.

The threat of future water shortages in the Sacramento area is largely a problem of those outside of the American River watershed claiming American River water before the needs of the area are met. This threat largely comes from efforts to extend the Folsom-South Canal and the federal water contract with the East Bay Municipal Utility District.

The recent effort by the city and county of Sacramento to share the city's water rights is an encouraging sign and should be supported by the community. Sacramento, El Dorado and Placer counties also should coordinate long range water resources planning for groundwater management, conjunctive use and conservation, and to ensure instream flows on the lower American River at levels that would enhance water quality, fish and wildlife, recreation and aesthetic values of the river.

The Corps also should study the transfer of up to 100,000 acre feet of flood space from Folsom to a flood control only Auburn Dam (which would regulate the North and Middle forks of the American River) to increase the yield of Folsom Reservoir to help meet the area's water supply needs. As part of the study, the Corps should decide whether this transfer would hamper the ability of Folsom Dam to withstand a major flood event on the South Fork of the American River.

A study underway by the state Department of Water Resources to determine the demand for water in the Sacramento area will give us a better idea of the future water needs of the area.

#### **NATOMAS AREA**

Part of the flood problem for the Natomas area would be solved by improved flood protection on the American River, but additional protection for this area will be necessary.

**We support flood protection for the entire Natomas area.**

Depending on design studies and federal appropriations, it could take ten or more years for protection of the entire Natomas area. To wait for that protection, however, would put the 24,000 Natomas residents in continued danger from floods, stop millions of dollars worth of planned development and cost Sacramentans an enormous amount of money for flood insurance. It would be irresponsible to wait for an "ultimate" flood solution if it means leaving 24,000 people and the developing areas in continued danger of flooding.

As an interim measure, we support the immediate construction of a cross levee from the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal to the Sacramento River, and improvements to the levees surrounding the area south of the cross levee.

This phased approach to flood protection will continue to benefit the Natomas area, even if additional cross levees are built further north or when the surrounding levees are upgraded. The entire history of Sacramento's flood system has been a phased approach, building levees around areas that are developing.

Even with improved flood protection in the Natomas area, we are concerned about the safety of people in the area if a flood were to occur. The Corps should study the bridges and roads in the area to assure that they will be adequate for evacuation in the event of a flood. The Corps should recommend building requirements in the deep flooding areas of Natomas to ensure that there are locations where people can remain above the flood level until evacuated.

#### DRY CREEK/ARCADE CREEK AREA

We support the construction and improvement of levees and drains in the Dry Creek and Arcade Creek areas as part of a joint project with the Natomas area.

Part of the flood problem for this area would be solved by improved flood protection on the American River; however, work done in Natomas would cause this area further flood problems. Levees in this area need to be raised and extended, and must be done concurrently with work in Natomas.

Additional work in the Sacramento Metropolitan area may be necessary as further studies indicate weak spots in our flood control system. We urge the various levels of government to maintain a continued high level of interest in this issue and to cooperate in every way feasible to assure the area with the flood protection it needs.