

Environmental movement investigation urged

Rep. Doolittle, R-Calif., questions left-wing leanings of some leaders and wants information on funding sources

By ED MERRIMAN
Capital Press Staff Writer

WILSONVILLE, Ore. — Rep. John Doolittle, R-Calif., received a standing ovation from members of Oregonians in Action when he called for a federal investigation into what he described as left-wing leaders of environmental extremist groups.

Doolittle was keynote speaker at the annual land-use forum held by Oregonians in Action in Tigard, Ore., that promotes private property rights.

"The left promotes conflict, with the idea that out of conflict comes progress. That is the tenet of communism and of the environmental movement," he said.

It's time for landowners, natural resource industries and others interested in preserving American democracy and free enterprise systems to go on the offensive against extreme environmental policies instead of simply playing defense in what he described as a political war over constitutionally protected private property rights.

One of the first steps of that offensive should include a national investigation of environmental

groups and their leaders, Doolittle said.

"I want to get the top national scholars to dissect the environmental movement, identify who the left-wing leaders are, their political connections, how they get their funding, what tax laws they take advantage of, then change the game and attack them," Doolittle said.

Jeff Allen, executive director of the Oregon Environmental Council, headquartered in Portland, said the federal investigation idea smacks of McCarthyism, referring to the 1950s-era congressional investigation into communism in America spearheaded by former Sen. Joe McCarthy, R-Minn.

"I wasn't alive when McCarthy was doing his thing, but I think we have kind of been there, done that," Allen said. "I suppose that the standard response would have to be that we would be delighted to have that kind of investigation, and at the same time we would like to take a look at who is funding Oregonians in Action."

"We have a lot less to hide than our opponents do," Allen said. Funding information and names of boards of directors of nonprofit environmental groups are public records that can be reviewed at any time.

Allen, whose comments were not part of the OIA meeting and were obtained during an interview on April 5, acknowledged that among environmental groups there are some that are more left-leaning than others within the broad spectrum of viewpoints represented by the environmental movement.



EXTREMISM — It's time to go on the offensive against extreme environmental policies instead of playing defense, says Rep. John Doolittle, R-Calif. He wants left-wing ties of green groups investigated. (Courtesy Oregonians in Action)

Larry George, OIA executive director, said Doolittle was invited to speak at the forum in part to raise awareness among landowners about a connection between left-wing environmental extremists and government policies and regulations undermining private property rights and natural resource industries such as agriculture and forestry.

Doolittle told the 340 people attending the forum that he believes left-wing extremists with an agenda similar to communism have duped the Clinton administration and a substantial number of Democratic congressmen, state legislators and officials of natural resource agencies into implementing certain policies and regulations. These policies, such as those con-

nected with the Endangered Species Act, violate constitutionally protected property rights.

"The nature of the left is based on the Communist Manifesto, and frankly the essence of communism is the abolition of private property rights," Doolittle said.

"In the case of environmentalism, first we heard we need to clean up our water, we need to clean up our air. We did those things. Then we had the Endangered Species Act and we find out it is not just talking about saving the eagles or the bears, but it indeed extends down to hundreds of thousands of things like mollusks and sand shrimp."

As an example of just how far out of whack environmental pro-

tections have gotten, Doolittle cited a recent case in the San Bernardino area of California where wildlife officials suggested that traffic on Interstate 10 be slowed down to 15 miles per hour to protect a species of fly.

Outlandish discussions about tearing down dams on the Columbia/Snake river system are also part of the agenda of left-wing extremists using the public's support of environmental

causes to undermine the region's economy, natural resource industries and private enterprise system, Doolittle said.

"Do you know how many billions of dollars of taxpayer money we have actually wasted on the salmon program with nothing to show for it?" Doolittle asked. "The sky is the limit for the spending of money for whatever our environmental friends want."

"The leaders of the left care nothing about the environment. It is simply a book by which they advance their unrelenting control over people and property," Doolittle said.

A look at areas where communism has actually ruled shows what it did for the environment. "Those are the grossest examples of environmental degradation, but left-wing people know that if you talk about defending something in the environment you can pro-

pose almost anything and get away with it."

To preserve private property rights, natural resource industries and ultimately America's free enterprise system, Doolittle called on OIA members attending the meeting to go on the political offensive and spread the word about the threats he sees from the environmental movement.

"We have to make politics part of everything we do, and just accept it as the price for liberty in this country," Doolittle said.

OEC's Allen said public participation provisions of the Endangered Species Act allowing citizen lawsuits are the types of things that raise the ire of rural landowners and people involved in natural resource industries. But those are exactly what distinguishes America from a lot of communist governments, Allen said.

"I actually did a fair amount of work for a group in Washington D.C., that was helping East European countries rewrite their environmental laws, and the No. 1 thing they were excited about was the type of public participation we have with citizen lawsuits. They wanted to make sure the people gained access to the political system and that it's not controlled by communist party officials."

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Rep. John Doolittle, R-Calif.

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MEMPHIS

Flood: Doolittle says committee wants water-supply provisions

Continued from page B1

squarely on the Rocklin congressman. "Doolittle keeps going back and trying to make this a water-supply bill and not a flood-control bill," said Boxer, who sits on Chafee's panel. "He torpedoed a chance to complete this before the Memorial Day break. It's pathetic."

Doolittle said he is simply responding to appeals from the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which he said wants to add some water-supply provisions in exchange for authorizing the construction of a taller Folsom Dam.

"The committee is pressing us to come up with some things that we could do along with the raising of Folsom Dam," he said in an interview Thursday. "The committee is trying to cut a deal and make everyone happy. And we're trying to respond to that process, so far without result."

"I'd like to get some of the water-supply projects," Doolittle added. "That's why I am responding. I'm eager to cooperate."

A spokesman for Rep. Robert Matsui, D-Sacramento, said the congressman continues to oppose tying water-supply and flood-control provisions together.

"Congressman Doolittle's interest is obviously to get water supply for his district and it's important that water supply and flood control don't get linked," said Jim Bonham. "They're both legitimate issues, but flood control is what we're most interested in."

In late April, Doolittle's proposal to dramatically increase water supplies to Placer, El Dorado and San Joaquin counties was stripped from the House version of the water resources bill when it became clear it faced a tough and probably losing struggle on the House floor.

The House then passed the amended measure, which addresses Sacramento's flood worries by authorizing the construction of additional outlets in Folsom Dam and by commissioning a study of the feasibility of raising the structure. It would increase the city's flood protection to almost the 140-year level.

Weeks earlier, the Senate had approved its own water resources bill that took a different tack by raising American River levees instead of the dam and by adding outlets to the structure. It would give Sacramento a 170-year level of protection.

Senate and House negotiators started working on a compromise, and Doolittle said in an interview earlier this month that he was not going to expend a lot of energy trying to reinstate his water-supply language during that process. "It's not like I'm burning the midnight oil to get back what was dropped," he said at the time.

But since then, the congressman has offered privately to couple at least some water-supply improvements with Sacramento's flood-control measures.

For example, Doolittle has asked for a \$100 million authorization to finance equipment to di-

vert up to 35,000 acre-feet of Sacramento River water to Placer County annually, and \$22 million to transport 10,000 acre-feet of water from Folsom Lake to the El Dorado Irrigation District.

Such language would be unacceptable to Rep. Ellen Tauscher, D-Pleasanton, who fought the earlier water-supply provisions in the House transportation committee.

"We won a battle in a war that we are not going to shy away from," she said Thursday. "We're not going to allow irresponsible water grabs."

Also impeding progress on a compromise bill is a \$2 billion difference in the Senate and House versions.

The Sacramento Bee

SUNDAY

May 30, 1999

Exhibit: X-32

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By Herbert A. Sample
Bee Washington Bureau

Flood-protection measure stalled Many blame Doolittle for delay

WASHINGTON - Congress left town for a week-long recess Thursday without finishing work on a huge water resources development bill that contains significant flood-protection improvements for Sacramento.

Lawmakers and aides said earlier this month that they expected to send the measure to the White House before the Memorial Day recess. But the bill is hung up for at least two reasons, one of which is an attempt by Rep. John Doolittle, R-Rocklin, to reinstate water-supply provisions that were stripped out by the House.

Doolittle's efforts, aimed at closed-door negotiations between House and Senate members and their aides, are causing some consternation on the Senate side.

"Those provisions . . . were rejected by the House," said Sen. John Chafee, R-R.I., chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. "So what they seem to be doing is asking us . . . to put in a measure that one, has been rejected by the House, and two, has not been accepted by the Senate. And that's some stretch."

Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., laid the blame

Please see FLOOD, page B4

Congress to create joint panel to assess capital water issues

By Herbert A. Sample
Bee Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — After weeks of fruitless back-room negotiations by their aides, House and Senate leaders have opted to create a joint conference committee to hammer out a compromise water resources development bill. Topic A will be resolving the dispute over flood control and water supply in Sacramento.

The conference committee will contain 10 House members — including Rep. John Doolittle, R-Rocklin, who has pushed for a water resources measure that either approves projects to increase water supplies in his area or that preserves his ability to seek those projects in the future.

The committee, which could begin meeting as early as next week, also likely will have at least seven senators, including Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., who was appointed Thursday. Boxer opposes the water supply projects, an aide said.

"I'm pleased the process is moving forward," Rep. Robert Matsui, D-Sacramento, said in a statement. "Naming conferees formalizes the process and should certainly help move things along. Obviously, the goal is to get the highest level of flood protection for Sacramento."

Matsui does not sit on the relevant House committee and therefore cannot be on the conference committee.

"We're optimistic that the leadership of both chambers are saying this must go forward," said Pete Evich, Doolittle's legislative director. "So we're optimistic that a resolution will be reached."

Efforts to improve Sacramento's level of flood protection have been stalled since late April when the House passed a \$4.3 billion water resources bill. One provision would authorize the construction of more outlets in Folsom Dam and feasibility studies on raising both the dam and American River

levees at a cost of \$185 million.

The Senate had previously adopted a \$2.3 billion version that tackles the Sacramento issue differently by authorizing actual construction of taller levees and the additional outlets in Folsom Dam, and improvements to Sacramento River flood control facilities — at a cost of \$505.4 million.

Aides from the relevant Senate and House committees met periodically over the last three months but could not draft a compromise that provided both additional flood protection for Sacramento and satisfied Doolittle.

He wants either improved water supplies for Placer and El Dorado counties or nothing more than studies of raising Folsom Dam. If only studies are permitted this year, Doolittle retains leverage to push for water projects next year when Congress debates approving actual construction of a higher dam.

Doolittle also vehemently opposes major increases to the height of American River levees.

On the other hand, Matsui has pressed for a combination of projects that would raise his district's flood protection to at least the 160-year level — giving it a one-in-160 chance of flooding in any one year. The city now has a 95-year level of protection.

The issue was discussed Wednesday, at a meeting of Senate GOP leader Trent Lott of Mississippi, House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., and the chairmen and ranking Democrats of the relevant committees in both houses. The result was the decision to create a conference committee.

It is unusual for such a panel to be convened because water resources measures tend to be non-controversial. But the difficult Sacramento flood control and water supply issues have flummoxed the process this year and last — prompting the move to elevate the negotiations to the level of members.

Will new water bill push help Matsui or Doolittle?

Pressure increases as Congress' vacation draws near

By Herbert A. Sample
Bee Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — With just a week remaining before lawmakers jet away for summer vacations, pressure is mounting to get a water resources development measure through Congress and onto the president's desk — and fast.

But it's unclear whose cause that helps most — Rep. Robert Matsui's push to get as much new flood protection as possible for his Sacramento constituents or Rep. John Doolittle's effort to win water supply improvements for his foothills district.

The next few days, then, could be crucial as a handful of congressional committee chairmen and several congressional aides try to reconcile differing House and Senate versions of the water resources bill and settle the years-long confrontation over flood control and water supply in the Sacramento region.

"I am optimistic that we can resolve this before the end of next week and bring it shortly thereafter to the floor" of the House and Senate, said Rep. Sherwood Boehlert, R-N.Y., who heads the House Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee.

Will all parties be happy with that resolution? he was asked. "Pretty much everyone (will be) singing from the same verse, same

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Right now, Sacramento is in a good position because we're going to get a significant increase in flood protection,” Bonham said, adding that Matsui will not offer a water supply plan. “It's not our place to develop a water supply proposal.”

The appetite for moving ahead with the water resources bill — a politically popular vehicle that spreads billions of dollars of federally funded navigation, flood-control and other water-related projects around the country — was evident Thursday when a House-Senate conference committee met briefly for the first time.

“It is my strong desire to complete action on this bill and send it to the president for signature before the August recess,” said Sen. John Chafee, R-R.I., the panel's chairman.

Chafee and his House counterpart, Rep. Bud Shuster, R-Pa., agreed to meet privately today and to reconvene the committee Monday afternoon. There was no discussion of the Sacramento issue.

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Jim Bonham
Matsui legislative director



Robert Matsui

The Democrat wants as much flood protection as possible.



John Doolittle

The Republican lawmaker seeks water supply improvements for his district.

tions are planned for today and over the weekend.

Just the fact that the committee had to convene at all was news. In past years, reconciling different versions of water resources legislation was a relatively easy task handled by aides with little formal involvement by members.

But this year there are several significant disagreements. And the one very big hang-up has been finding a way to upgrade Sacramento's flood protection as much as possible while still satisfying Doolittle's request.

Neither the House nor the Senate version contains Doolittle's water supply projects. Normally, that would be the end of it. But Doolittle has sway with House Speaker Dennis Hastert and House GOP Whip Tom DeLay, so he was able to influence the staff-level talks over the last three months.

METRO

Flood control package praised

\$258 million in projects OK'd

By John D. Cox
See Staff Writers

Sacramento officials Thursday hailed congressional approval of \$258 million in new flood protection as the biggest boost to the capital's safety since construction of Folsom Dam in the 1950s.

Heather Fargo, chairwoman of the regional Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, called it "a very significant step for flood control in Sacramento," although everyone agreed that still more is needed.

While SAFCA failed to achieve all it wanted, Fargo noted that the city level of flood protection would rise sharply - from its current level of 95-year protection to about 140 years, meaning that any given year it will have a one-in-140 chance of flooding.

"We like those odds a whole lot better," Muriel P. Johnson, chairwoman of the Board of Supervisors as well as a SAFCA board member, told a news conference at the confluence of the American and Sacramento rivers.

In Washington, the Senate approved by unanimous consent the \$7 billion water resources measure. The House then approved the measure late Thursday by a voice vote.

The bill does not authorize funds for two additional flood control strategies that were fought for by Rep. Bob Matsui, D-Sacramento, but opposed by Rep. John R. Doolittle, R-Rocklin.

Matsui had sought funding to study the feasibility of raising the height of Folsom Dam by 6½ feet, and the Senate had sought funding for raising the height of miles of downstream levees all the way into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Either of those improvements would have boosted the city's flood protection to about the 170-year level.

Doolittle had sought, but failed, to get approval for additional water supply to his Sierra foothill district.

With House leadership support,

Flood: Modifications should allow Folsom to handle bigger storms

Continued from page B1

Doolittle had successfully blocked final congressional action for two years, and a compromise that included new water supplies for Placer County came close to winning approval Wednesday until opposition from San Joaquin Valley representatives scuttled the deal.

Still, the final package includes \$150 million to enlarge eight existing outlets to Folsom Dam and add five new outlets. These improvements will allow the dam to release more water sooner into the American River.

Officials estimate that these modifications will allow Folsom Dam and reservoir to handle a storm 30 percent larger than can be handled at present.

Another \$25 million in the approved legislation will be used to raise the height of levees along the American River where they are especially low - an area called the Mayhew Drain on the south

side of the river and another near Howe Avenue on the north bank.

The package also includes \$66 million to upgrade levees along south Sacramento streams, \$10 million to upgrade levees of the Natomas Cross Canal and \$7 million of improvements along Magpie and Don Julio creeks to prevent flooding of McClellan Air Force Base.

Work on all five projects will begin in the spring of 2001, officials said. The four levee projects will be completed in 2003, and the Folsom Dam outlets will be completed in 2006.

"These five projects are the foundation for long-term flood protection for Sacramento," said Johnson. "There will be more. We will not give up."

Mayor Joe Serna Jr. noted that the city's goal remains flood protection at least at the 200-year level, the national standard.

"We have our work cut out for us in the future," he said.

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OTHER COMMENTARY

The politics of flood control

SAFCA has struggled to find common ground with Rep. Doolittle

By Heather Fargo
Special to the Bee

Everyone living in the floodplain and surrounding neighborhoods should be happy that after years of asking for a higher level of flood protection, Congress heard our request and granted Sacramento relief. Thanks to the leadership and ability of our own representatives, especially Rep. Robert Matsui and Sen. Barbara Boxer, the 1999 Water Resources Development Act included significant support for Sacramento.



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It authorizes more than \$250 million in new flood control for our community, including \$150 million in improvements to Folsom Dam, \$35 million to make further improvements to the levee system and \$65 million for flood control improvements in south Sacramento. The dam improvements will require seven years to construct; the remaining projects will be complete in four years. While this is less flood protection than Sacramento needs and less than we were seeking from Congress, it is an important incremental step that achieves 140-year protection.

The total package of flood control improvements is the largest authorized by Congress for Sacramento since Folsom Dam was built more than 50 years ago. Congress, recognizing the need for even higher levels of flood protection than provided by these projects, also approved two feasibility studies, one for a miniraise (6 feet to 10 feet of added height) to Folsom Dam and another for making more significant improvements to levees along the American and Sacramento rivers.

For those who seek to improve flood protection, it is cause for celebration. But after reading former Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) board chairman Dave Cox's Op-Ed piece in *The Bee* Sept. 10 ("In opposing Doolittle, SAFCA sold area's flood control short"), I felt *Bee* readers could be confused by his account of the politics surrounding this recent congressional authorization.

Here is a detailed accounting of what transpired. First, there is an implication that SAFCA failed to work with Rep. John Doolittle and, as a consequence, wound up with a lower level of flood protection than we

might have otherwise. Every effort was made to reach out to him, to ask for his help and the help of all of our elected representatives. However, the price for his cooperation proved too high. He has continued to push for a project at Auburn, which has been soundly rejected twice by Congress and which likely cannot be passed in this or any other Congress. Late in the discussions, he put forward a package of water supply projects that were not fully coordinated with affected interests and that were strongly opposed by others in the state.

Cox advanced the notion that, because Doolittle was displeased with what he saw as our lack of support, Congress "stuck SAFCA with a bill for nearly \$100 million" in costs associated with reoperation of Folsom Dam. If true, this would strike us as mean-spirited indeed. However, the notion is simply wrong. Under the existing agreement between SAFCA and the Bureau of Reclamation, SAFCA is responsible for replacing water at Folsom if – and only if – there is a real water shortage due to flood control operations. The best available estimate of SAFCA's costs for water and power replacement per that agreement is \$15 million over the next 35 years, according to the consultants who developed the plan for improved operations at Folsom.

While Congress, at Doolittle's urging, did add a provision requiring replacement water to mitigate for lost recreational uses when Folsom is lowered for flood control, the language makes clear that the Department of the Interior is responsible for recreational water, not SAFCA.

By way of background, SAFCA is a joint powers agency formed in the aftermath of the record 1986 storm to provide a single regional policy voice in identifying and implementing a plan to provide Sacramento with a minimum of 200-year flood protection. SAFCA is governed by a 13-member board comprising all five Sacramento county supervisors; three City Council members appointed by the mayor; and two representatives each appointed by the American River Flood Control District, Reclamation District 1000 and the Sutter County supervisor representing the Natomas portion of Sutter County.

In 1992 and again in 1996, SAFCA and the entire Sacramento congressional delegation supported a dam at Auburn. Both times Congress declined to approve a dam and sent Sacramento back to study other options. After two attempts, it was obvious that another plan more palatable to Congress (a no-dam

alternative) had to be offered, and that's exactly what happened in 1997.

Sacramento was in no position to wait any longer for flood protection. The alternative plan, developed by the Army Corps of Engineers with input from the state of California and SAFCA, called for a combination of outlet modifications at Folsom Dam to allow quicker evacuation of stored water when flooding threatens and a stronger system of levees and floodways along the American and Sacramento rivers to allow higher flows from the dam. Doolittle suggested an alternative approach of adding storage at Folsom Dam, which may, in combination with the outlet modifications, provide a comparable level of protection. SAFCA and the city enthusiastically supported consideration of the alternative put forward by Doolittle.

Matsui and Boxer pushed hard for both these options and kept the issue alive until closing deliberations on the bill. Congress authorized the outlet improvements and some of the levee improvements and asked for further study on the other options.

Cox's assertion that SAFCA missed the opportunity to have the federal government pay the entire cost of the modifications to Folsom Dam is also mistaken. Under current cost-sharing for flood control, the federal government pays a maximum of 65 percent. Doolittle never offered a plan in Congress to authorize 100 percent funding by the federal government. Even if he had, it is highly unlikely that Congress and the Clinton administration would have approved such a radical departure from the mandated cost-sharing formula.

The SAFCA board of directors, its staff and consultants devoted hundreds of hours in efforts to find common ground with Doolittle, but we have always sought higher levels of flood protection for Sacramento than he would support. It is unfortunate that this is viewed as an unwillingness to work together. To the contrary, SAFCA looks forward to the opportunity to work with Matsui, Boxer, Doolittle and the entire regional delegation.

Rest assured, SAFCA will continue to work on behalf of all Sacramentans in delivering the highest level of flood protection at the lowest possible cost.

Heather Fargo is chairwoman of SAFCA and represents District 1 on the City Council. She can be reached by phone at 264-7001 or by e-mail at hfargo@sacto.org.

► **METRO/REGIONAL**

★ ★ Tuesday, November 24, 1998 **B3**

The Sacramento Bee

Doolittle in key role for flood bills

By Stephen Green
Bee Capitol Bureau

U.S. Rep. John Doolittle has gained a new committee assignment in the Congress that he said will enhance his efforts to improve flood control in the Sacramento area.

When the House reconvenes in January, the Rocklin Republican will serve on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure; which has jurisdiction over flood-control projects. In recent years, local flood-control bills have stalled in that committee.

"The one and only reason I sought to be placed on this committee is to influence more effectively the debate on flood control for Sacramento," Doolittle said.

The congressman already chairs the Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power, which oversees Bureau of Reclamation projects. That job fits well with the new assignment, he said.

Doolittle is a proponent of build-



Rep. John Doolittle

His committee assignment gives him jurisdiction over flood-control projects.

ing an Auburn dam on the American River, a position that puts him at odds with other political leaders who favor less expensive alternatives, such as improving levees and enlarging the outlets of Folsom Dam.

To gain the new post, Doolittle had to give up his seat on the Agriculture Committee. That position went to Rep.-elect Doug Ose, R-Sacramento, who was unable to get his first-choice assignments.

Ose had sought positions on the Appropriations or Commerce committees, but those plum assignments rarely are given to freshmen. Ose also got seats on the Banking and Financial Services Committee, and the Government Reform and Oversight Committee.

Ose will replace Rep. Vic Fazio, D-West Sacramento, who is retiring at the end of this term.