according to Congresswoman Doris Matsui, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will announce that flood insurance rates for Natomas property owners will remain at the current preferred risk level (about $450 per year). This acknowledges the progress SAFCA has made lowering flood risk, made possible by SAFCA’s assessments approved by property owners in 2007 and 2011. Without the levee construction work completed and funded by these assessments, property owners would have faced a series of insurance rate increases resulting in up to $1,500 annual premiums.

While $32 million in federal construction funds and FEMA’s upcoming announcement regarding flood insurance rates are anticipated in Natomas, it is important to note that local matching funds proposed under the new assessment are necessary to keep this momentum going.
SAFCA is prepared to move forward with a series of identified projects to enhance the region’s flood protection:

**Natomas basin levee improvements** — complete up to an additional 24 miles of improvements to the levees that surround the Natomas basin to address deep underseepage and levee stability conditions

**Levee improvements to the Sacramento River** — complete seven miles of cutoff walls and relief wells to address deep underseepage along the east levee in the Little Pocket and Pocket areas and construct up to nine miles of erosion control improvements

**American River improvements** — raise Folsom Dam, improve the dam’s temperature control facilities and address potential erosion during high-flow events in the American River channel

**North Sacramento Streams improvements** — install cutoff walls, seepage berms and relief wells along four miles of the north and south levees of Arcade Creek and the east levee of the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal (NEMDC); implement a corridor management plan along portions of the NEMDC/Steelhead Creek and its tributaries

**Flood protection system operation and maintenance** — manage levee encroachment and vegetation issues; repair infrastructure damages; and improve system access, levee monitoring and flood fight operations during a flood event
SAFCA has achieved a great deal in its efforts to protect Sacramento from the threat of catastrophic flooding. For example, improvements to Folsom Dam flood operations and almost 20 years of upgrades to Sacramento’s levee system pulled nearly 120,000 properties out of the 100-year floodplain. This eliminated the requirement for property owners to maintain high-cost flood insurance.

Since 2007, however, changes in state and federal levee design standards adopted after Hurricane Katrina reversed this trend. In 2008, the Natomas area was mapped back into the 100-year floodplain. In 2013, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) withdrew its 100-year certifications for levees outside Natomas, making property owners in the American River, Sacramento River and North Sacramento areas vulnerable to potential remapping into the 100-year floodplain.

Fortunately, construction projects supported by the 2007 Consolidated Capital Assessment District and the 2011 Natomas Basin Local Assessment District have limited effects of the changes in levee design standards. Early implementation of these levee improvements around the Natomas basin has kept mandatory insurance rates at lower preferred risk levels (approximately $450 per year).

Completion of the Folsom Dam auxiliary spillway and levee improvements along the American River has made it possible to re-certify this portion of the flood control system with minor additional effort. Because of extensive levee evaluation work along the Sacramento River and in the North Sacramento area, SAFCA is in a position to secure state funding to address identified problems and prevent remapping. The state has committed 70 percent of the funds needed to address identified levee stability problems along the Sacramento River and in the North Sacramento area. But the matching 30 percent in local funds is needed to allow SAFCA to do the work.

SAFCA cannot sustain its efforts to avoid mandatory high-cost flood insurance without this additional local funding. Preferred risk insurance rates will only be maintained in Natomas if the levee improvement program is completed. The initial federal and state funds to commence the construction work have been secured, but additional local funds are still needed.

SAFCA is proposing to secure these new local funds by replacing the existing assessment district with a new one. This will require a property owner balloting process similar to that of 2007. If the process is successful, property owners in Natomas can maintain current preferred risk insurance rates until the levee improvement program is complete. Property owners in the Sacramento River and North Sacramento areas will avoid mandatory high-cost insurance requirements. However, if the process fails, high-cost flood insurance (estimated to be as much as $1,500 per year) will become a reality in all of these areas.

SAFCA’s proposed assessment would provide the local funding needed to get Sacramento to a 200-year level of flood protection by 2025 and more than a 200-year level of protection thereafter. This proposal would not only greatly reduce the risk of catastrophic flooding, it would minimize the likelihood of future regulatory changes requiring another assessment.

### Level of Flood Protection

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<th>Project Areas</th>
<th>100-Yr</th>
<th>200-Yr</th>
<th>100-Yr</th>
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<tr>
<td>North Sacramento</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Project Details

- American River levees can be certified for 100-year protection by 2017 and 200-year protection by 2025; Erosion work provides >200-year protection.
- Sacramento River levees can be certified for 100-year protection by 2021 and 200-year protection by 2025; Erosion work provides >200-year protection.
- Natomas basin levees can be certified for 100-year and 200-year protection by 2025; Project provides >200-year protection.
- South Sacramento area levees can be certified for 100-year protection by 2017; 200-year flooding is very shallow.
- North Sacramento area levees can be certified for 100-year protection by 2019 and 200-year protection by 2025; Corridor management plan provides >200-year protection.

### 100-Year Flood Protection

100-year flood protection is the federal standard to determine if levees, dams, channels or other flood protection features are considered adequate to safely contain a 100-year flood. A 100-year flood has a one percent chance of occurring each year. An area threatened by such a flood is referred to as the 100-year floodplain. These areas are shown on maps prepared by FEMA, making high cost flood insurance mandatory and restricting new development, infill and structure rebuilding. After the 1986 record flood exposed flood protection system deficiencies, much of Sacramento was mapped into the 100-year floodplain. System wide improvements to flood defenses began in 1990. Natomas and North Sacramento were mapped out of the 100-year floodplain in 1998; the American River area was mapped out in 2004; and the Sacramento River area was mapped out in 2006. Since then, levee design standards have changed and the Corps has withdrawn its 100-year certifications for all of these areas.

### 200-Year Flood Protection

In 2008, the California Legislature established the 200-year flood protection standard for Central Valley urban areas. A 200-year flood has a 0.5 percent chance of occurrence each year and includes a greater amount of runoff than a 100-year flood. The state directed the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to conduct studies and provide guidance to cities and counties using maps depicting the 200-year floodplain. DWR developed new urban levee design standards beyond the federal government’s requirements, including addressing hazardous levee vegetation and encroachments and maintaining landslide levee access. Central Valley cities and counties are required to prepare plans to achieve the state’s 200-year flood protection standard by 2025 to allow new development in a 200-year floodplain.
SAFCA’s proposed assessment district (which would replace the Consolidated Capital Assessment District formed in 2007) is designed to ensure that property owners will only pay for flood protection improvements that benefit their own property. These assessments are based on the special benefits of reducing potential flood damages for each individual property within the new district – if the identified flood protection projects are completed.

To ensure fairness in determining each individual assessment, the following variables are considered:

- **Anticipated damage to land and structure** – Possible damages based on depths of flooding are calculated per square foot for residential, commercial, industrial and public properties. Damages are different for each property type.

- **Source of flooding** – Each property owner will pay only for addressing specific flood threats to his or her own property. For example, if a residential property is only subject to flooding from the American River, that homeowner would contribute only to projects on that river.

- **Risk of flooding and likely depths** – The proposed assessment district has been divided into flood depth zones depicting the potential extent of flooding in each area. These zones are 0-5 feet, 5-10 feet and greater than 10 feet.

Using this methodology, annual assessments range from $19 to $163 for single-family residences. It is important to note that this new assessment replaces the assessment from 2007. The average increase in the amount of the assessment for all single-family residences in the district is $42 per year (the equivalent of $3.50 per month).

Assessments would be imposed for a 30-year period, starting in 2017.

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

At its April 21 meeting, the SAFCA Board will take action on this matter, deciding whether to ask property owners to approve the assessment. If the Board proceeds, ballots will be mailed in late April to roughly 60,000 property owners in theNatomas, North Sacramento, Pocket, Land Park, Meadowview and American River neighborhoods as well as South Sutter County. Property owners would be assessed based on factors such as likely flood depth, building square footage, parcel acreage and land use – and will be asked to pay only for projects that provide a direct benefit to them.

Property owners will have 45 days to return ballots. Each returned ballot will be weighed in proportion to the assessment amount to be paid. The assessment district can be established only if more than 50 percent of ballots cast are in support and the Board approves. New capital assessments would appear on tax bills in fall 2017, which would replace the current capital assessments.