



## **Editorial: City, county seek flood of permits**

*August 13, 2008*

Effective on Dec. 8, the federal government will place the Natomas basin in a new flood hazard zone. Any development permitted after that date will have to be elevated three feet or more. The designation will effectively restrict new construction in Natomas until its levees are upgraded in roughly two years.

The real estate industry has long known these restrictions were coming. They became inevitable last year after studies of the basin's levees revealed that, despite decades of levee improvements, Natomas remains vulnerable to an unacceptable risk of flood. But just to make sure developers know about the deadline, the city and county of Sacramento have issued a press release. Yes, a press release' The notice urges builders "to plan ahead as they look to build in the Natomas floodplain" and get their permit applications submitted well before the Dec. 8 deadline. "Builders and developers who are issued new building permits before the December deadline will be able to build as planned," the press release states.

This is a fine kettle of fish. The federal government, which is trying to protect taxpayers who subsidize flood insurance in Natomas and other flood basins, has called for a "timeout" on new development. The state of California tacitly supports this timeout because it limits the state's potential liability to flood damages.

Yet the city and county, supposedly partners with the state and federal governments in upgrading Natomas, are now encouraging developers to hurry up and build in a new flood hazard zone.

Hmm ... What is it about the word "hazard" that our local governments don't understand?