



October 22, 2010

TO: Commenting Parties

**FROM: John Bassett, P.E., Director of Engineering, SAFCA
(916) 874-7606**

SUBJECT: FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/ FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT ON THE AMERICAN RIVER WATERSHED COMMON FEATURES PROJECT/ NATOMAS POST-AUTHORIZATION CHANGE REPORT/ NATOMAS LEVEE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, PHASE 4B LANDSIDE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT (SCH # 2009112025)

The subject FEIS/FEIR is now available for public review, and has been prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Sacramento District and the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), with USACE as the lead agency for NEPA compliance and SAFCA as the lead agency for CEQA compliance. The FEIS/FEIR consists of a reprint of the entire draft environmental impact statement/draft environmental impact report (DEIS/DEIR), responses to comments received on the DEIS/DEIR, and corrections, revisions, and other clarifications, amplifications and minor modifications to the DEIS/DEIR made in response to comments or as a result of USACE's and SAFCA's ongoing planning efforts.

The overall purpose of the Natomas Levee Improvement Program (NLIP) is to bring the entire 42-mile Natomas Basin perimeter levee system into compliance with applicable Federal and state standards for levees protecting urban areas. The NLIP Landside Improvements Project consists of four phases (1, 2, 3, and 4a and 4b). The Phase 4b Project is the final subphase of the NLIP Landside Improvements Project, and consists of improvements to the remaining portions of the Natomas Basin's perimeter levee system in Sutter and Sacramento Counties, California, and associated landscape and irrigation/drainage infrastructure modifications.

The FEIS/FEIR will be submitted to Congress in late 2010 to support approval of USACE's American River Watershed Common Features Project (Common Features)/Natomas Post-authorization Change Report (Natomas PACR), which is an element of the Common Features General Re-evaluation Report. If the Common Features/Natomas PACR is authorized by Congress, USACE would implement the Phase 4b Project. If authorization is not granted, SAFCA could choose to implement the Phase 4b Project. Construction of the Phase 4b Project is planned for 2012–2016, assuming receipt of Congressional authorization, funding (if SAFCA decides to implement the Phase 4b Project without Federal participation), and all required environmental clearances, authorizations, and permits.

Contents of the FEIS/FEIR

During the public review period for the DEIS/DEIR, written comments were received from Federal, state, and local agencies; tribal government; organizations; businesses; and individuals, as well as oral testimony at a public meeting held on July 15, 2010¹. The FEIS/FEIR has been prepared to respond to comments received on the DEIS/DEIR, which are reproduced in the FEIS/FEIR, and to present new analysis and information added to the DEIS/DEIR as a result of considering these comments.

FEIS/FEIR Review Periods

The FEIS/FEIR is being distributed for public and agency review and comment, in accordance with NEPA and CEQA requirements. NEPA requires a 30-day public review for an FEIS, whereas CEQA requires a 10-day review (for commenting agencies only) for an FEIR. For this FEIS/FEIR, the NEPA and CEQA review periods will run concurrently, with the CEQA review period ending before the NEPA review period, as follows:

NEPA Review Period: October 22–November 22, 2010
CEQA Review Period: October 22–November 12, 2010

The FEIS/FEIR is being provided to those parties who submitted comments on the DEIS/DEIR. Other interested parties may review a printed copy of the FEIS/FEIR at the offices of USACE, Sacramento District or SAFCA (see addresses below) during normal business hours. The FEIS/FEIR is also available for viewing or downloading at USACE's Web site: www.spk.usace.army.mil or SAFCA's Web site: http://www.safca.org/Programs_Natomas.html. Printed or CD copies of the FEIS/FEIR may be requested from USACE by contacting Elizabeth Holland (see contact information below).

Following the CEQA review period, SAFCA will consider certification of the EIR and approval of the Phase 4b Project at the SAFCA Board of Directors meeting scheduled for 3:00 p.m. on November 12, 2010, located in the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors Chambers, Room 1450, at 700 H Street, Sacramento, California. The public is invited to attend in person, or view the meeting on SAFCA's Web site.

Following the NEPA review period, USACE will consider adoption of the EIS and will prepare a Record of Decision (ROD) documenting USACE's decision on the Phase 4b Project.

For further information regarding the FEIS/FEIR or to provide comments on the FEIS/FEIR, please contact Elizabeth Holland, USACE Sacramento District, Planning Division, 1325 J Street, Sacramento, CA, 95814, or email Elizabeth.G.Holland@usace.army.mil; or John Bassett, SAFCA Director of Engineering, 1007 7th Street, 7th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814, or email BassettJ@saccounty.net.

¹ In addition to the July 15 public hearing, three additional public meetings were conducted during the DEIS/DEIR public review period: July 13, 2010 at the South Natomas Community Center; July 21, 2010 at the Sacramento County Administration Building; and August 4, 2010 at the Pleasant Grove School. No formal comments were received at these three public hearings.