

Stein Buer:

This will be very brief. I don't want to stand between anyone and the tequila that might flow later. First of all, I wanted to thank Dr. Emir Macari for doing a fantastic job of keeping things on schedule and lively and asking the right questions at the right time as a tremendous contribution to the success of this event. And it's amazing to come to the last few minutes of a conference of this size and find so many of you still here, hanging in there, and that means the words that are spoken up here are heard and considered and will be carried outward in what we hope is a ripple effect to touch many additional people and lives. Special appreciation to Peter Buck and Lizette Crosbie and Gary Estes, who've worked very hard behind the scenes. Are you here now in the room? [Raise your arms.] Thank you.

And actually the entire staff of SAFCA has been working in the background trying to help with logistics, and thanks to all of them as well. So, much appreciated. And our cosponsors. I'm especially appreciative that both the state and the Corps were willing to be cosponsors of this event. It added a great deal of credibility and seriousness and I think has created a tone of collaboration, collaboration, collaboration. And that is wonderful. That's what we hope to achieve with this. We hope to bring as much good science to the table as possible, have that heard and discussed openly, with open minds. And I'm very optimistic at the close of this session that that indeed has been achieved.

We have brought a lot of good information together, experts from around the country and Europe as well, but has greatly broadened the debates and I think our collective understanding of the issues we're dealing with. I'm also optimistic because I've heard from the agencies a real commitment to take this science into consideration in formulating policy as we go forward. We're not going to be chained to the past. We're going to use the best information as we go forward. I heard Ed Hecker say that very eloquently. That is wonderful. It is often difficult for agencies to step

beyond the patterns of the past and say no, we're going to open our minds and we're going to go forward and use the best available information.

So, I want to echo the last thing that I heard the panel say, which is we're not going to stop with the closure of this session. We will work very hard to go forward using this information, determining what else we need to know, and putting it to work in formulating the policy that will help us achieve real improvements on the ground. Improved flood protection, habitat. These are not necessarily tradeoffs. They're things that we can achieve together successfully. So, thank you all very much.

Les Harder:

Well, thank you for your patience. Earlier this morning, there was the remark made that the expectation is that somebody somewhere is going to start suing each other, and I certainly hope that's not going to be the case, and I'm optimistic we'll avoid that. And the reason why is we value the partnership here. We value our partnership with the local agencies, the resource agencies, and certainly our major partner, the Corps of Engineering. There was a question earlier about what was the intent of the Corps with this white paper? I have no doubt the Corps's intent was to increase public safety. That's our general priority. You can imagine, though, when we saw the white paper, our reaction was what's going on?

The Corps standards, yes, have been around for a while, like five decades. They were developed without an environmental perspective. And Endangered Species has come along, so that policy's pretty much out of date. It was a rigid policy. [We certainly] had the perception that it was unachievable, at least on the waterside. It would be divisive, would not significantly reduce risk. Could not be achieved in a year. It would reduce public confidence. We were being set up to fail. And [that it would] overall result in lower public safety. But now I think because of the willingness of people to work together, I think the success of this conference creates an opportunity. An opportunity to have better maintenance, perhaps better habitat as well.

And so this is a great opportunity, a great conference. Clearly [there's available information, it was delivered here during] the conference, that there are major concerns that vegetation will harm levee safety. But there's also available research that says in some cases vegetation helps levees and reduces risk. We're encouraged by the Corps and remarks that Ed Hecker just made that they will seek flexibility, and they're going to review their policies and have it peer reviewed. And certainly those of us at the state want to be involved with that to the extent that we can.

Next steps -- I guess we ought to use the word "collaborative" [unintelligible] [more than anything else]. We do want to work collaboratively with the Corps, we do want to get a flexible approach, something that does have regional variances, regional policies, perhaps based on different regional vegetation. Maybe different moisture content in the soil in different regions [that affects strength]. We want to move together and have an implementable policy. We think the implementation is going to have to come in phases, probably based on the mysterious highest priority [things] first, and to be implementable it's probably going to take several years, perhaps maybe five years [unintelligible]. And we're going to continue this process. We're going to work carefully with our partners. We're going to work in the sessions starting tomorrow, and I'm confident and optimistic that we are going to have a successful policy developed and be better for it. So, thanks for your attention.

Steve Stockton: Well, I'm in an enviable position. I'm the only thing between you and going home. Everything's been said, but not everybody's said it, so now's my turn to say it. Now, you have two choices. I've got the long, written statement, or I have my oral statement. So, give me a sense of whether you want the five-page version or the one-page version.

Emir Macari: [Unintelligible] [I think the one-page version, did I hear?]

Steve Stockton:

Okay. So, let me summarize what I heard over the last two days. I came here to listen, learn, understand different perspectives, my personal goal's been accomplished. Favorite quote: when we try to pick out anything by itself, we find out it is hitched to every other thing in the universe. I love that. My summary. What I heard. Public safety is job one, will not be compromised. It's a system, vegetation is part of that system. We need a long-term comprehensive plan, one plan, not multiple competing plans. We need to prioritize investments to buy down risk, use our money wisely. We need to communicate risk to those at risk early and often. We need to reduce risk, not only the probability of failure but the consequences of that failure. We need to institute sound flood plane management practices. As I drive across the Delta, it scares me when I have to drive up and over the Bay, and I see a lot of development going on around me. I don't want to be out there creating new New Orleans as we speak. We will use science-based standards, we will collaborate -- I had to use it -- and revise standards in an open, transparent way.

Now, here's the Corps's commitment. The Corps will participate in the roundtable tomorrow organized by the Rec Board, DWR, and SAFCA to map out a way ahead. We will continue to participate as a member of the local interagency collaborative group, which is addressing these issues at the Corps district level, which encompasses all of the Central Valley. We will continue our national levee policy discussions, which California has attended. We'll also conduct a national roundtable. This will let us solicit input from across the nation on vegetation issues [in the system], synchronizing the coordination and regional efforts.

This ongoing effort is led by four organizations that cover the broadest participation of flood risk managers -- USAS, FEMA, the National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies, and Association of State Floodplain Managers. And Susan [Gilson] asked me to plug the NAFSMA conference, the first week in October in Newport, Road Island. So, I would all of you to participate in that. The Corps will

continue to involve resource agencies in discussions on this important issue, at both a national and regional level. We will evaluate the best way to incorporate the external peer review process in developing new policies. We will expand our collaborative efforts to include other agencies, such as FEMA and resource agencies that are affected by those policies.

So, bottom line, good policy takes time, thank you for the opportunity to participate. I would like to thank DWR, SAFCA, and the Reclamation Board for their leadership in putting this symposium together. So, thank you.