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**Congresswoman Matsui Asks President to Include Natomas Levee Project in Jobs Package**

*Public Safety Project Will Protect 100,000 Residents, Create 2,500 Jobs for Sacramento Region*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) sent a letter to President Barack Obama asking that federal authorization for the Natomas Levee Improvement Project (NLIP) be included in the jobs package the Administration is preparing to submit to Congress.

Congresswoman Matsui argues that the Natomas project will create much-needed jobs in the Sacramento region, while improving the flood protection levels for Natomas residents and businesses, writing, “By including authorizations for such projects, including one for the Natomas Levee Improvement Project, which has been fully vetted by your Administration, I believe your jobs package can help crucial public safety projects get built and put thousands of Americans back to work.” The letter continues, “I believe your jobs package is the appropriate vehicle for authorizing this project and others like it, as it achieves your economic goals.”

Sacramento County’s unemployment rate stands at 12.9 percent, and the construction industry has lost 33,000 jobs in the Sacramento region since 2006. When completed, the Natomas Levee Improvement Project will give the people of Natomas 200-year flood protection. The area was remapped by FEMA in 2008.

A copy of the signed letter is available [here](#) .

The full text of the letter is as follows:

Dear Mr. President:

As you develop a jobs package, I am writing to encourage you to include support for critical public safety infrastructure and flood protection projects. Many such projects require Congressional authorization, yet stand shovel ready. By including authorizations for such projects, including one for the Natomas Levee Improvement Project, which has been fully vetted by your Administration, I believe your jobs package can help crucial public safety projects get built and put thousands of Americans back to work.

This year's flooding in the South and Midwest is a reminder of the destructive force of Mother Nature and the economic consequences that she can have. It also is a reminder that properly planned, maintained and operated flood protection systems can save countless lives, protect property and prevent having to spend billions of dollars in Federal disaster relief.

There should be no argument that aging levees place too much of our public at risk. The American Society of Civil Engineers recently graded our nation's levees as a D-. Hurricane Katrina caused \$16 billion in damages, the 2008 Midwest floods caused over \$500 million and NOAA's National Climate Data Center has estimated that flooding in 2011 has caused between \$3 and \$5 billion in damages to our economy. Improvements to our nation's levees and other flood protection infrastructure are necessary to create jobs now and to save lives and property in the future.

Unfortunately, it has been four years since the last Water Resources Development Act was passed by Congress. Since then, a number of key infrastructure investments have been carefully studied by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with a keen eye towards both public safety and national economic justification.

One such project that has been thoroughly studied by the Corps of Engineers is the Natomas Basin component off the American River Watershed (Common Features) project in Sacramento, California. Levee deficiencies were found in the area in 2006 and it was remapped by FEMA in 2008. The Corps of Engineers has said the area has a level of flood protection of below 1 in 33 years, a third of the minimum national standard of 1 in 100 years.

The area to be protected by the project is home to over 100,000 people, two interstate highways and an international airport. It is heavily urbanized and home to dozens of schools and hundreds of small businesses. If a levee broke the damage would be similar to New Orleans. The Corps of Engineers has developed a levee improvement plan that would reduce 96 percent of expected flood damages, return an average of \$502 million in annual economic benefits and has a benefit to cost ratio of 6 to 1.

Additionally, local residents have voted to tax themselves on two separate occasions to pay for the improvements. In the absence of timely federal participation in construction, the State of California and Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency have already begun construction and will have spent upwards of \$350 million on the project by the end of this year. However, without federal authorization and further federal support construction will come to a halt, workers currently onsite will be sent home when this construction season ends and new hires will not occur.

The unemployment rate in Sacramento County stands at 12.9% and the construction industry alone has lost over 33,000 jobs over the last five years. The job creation benefits to this project and others like it are key to thousands of family's livelihoods. In fact, federal authorization of the Natomas Levee Basin would create over 2,500 well-paying construction jobs for a two-year period, primarily in the private sector. Since the project has already been initiated with State and local resources, the job-creation benefits are immediate, this project truly is "shovel ready."

On January 26, 2011, I re-introduced legislation ( [H.R. 433](#) ) that would authorize Federal funding for the Natomas levee project. It is my highest priority and I will continue to seek every and all avenues to pass this legislation. Unfortunately, it is clear that this and other projects like it, can only be completed if Congress acts to authorize the Corps to proceed. Projects that have signed Chief's Reports awaiting authorization also exist in Iowa, Kansas and a number of other states.

I believe your jobs package is the appropriate vehicle for authorizing this project and others like it, as it achieves your economic goals. Across the nation true shovel ready projects that will create jobs, boost economic activity, and improve public safety await authorization. That is why, I strongly urge you to include authorizing the Natomas Levee Project and other similar projects that have signed Chief's Reports in your jobs proposal and agenda for Congress.

Thank you for your continual efforts to put Americans back to work and for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

DORIS O. MATSUI  
Member of Congress

To learn more about Congresswoman Matsui's efforts to increase Sacramento's flood protection levels, please visit [www.matsui.house.gov/floodprotection](http://www.matsui.house.gov/floodprotection) .