

Yolo supervisors oppose plan to expand Yolo Bypass, widen Fremont Weir

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WOODLAND — The Yolo County Board of Supervisors is opposed to a proposal that would expand the Yolo Bypass and widen the Fremont Weir.

The proposal is the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, according to a news release from Beth Gabor, county manager of public affairs.

"The board is concerned that the proposal could place Yolo County communities, agriculture and our local economy in jeopardy," wrote Yolo County Board Chairman Jim Provenza in a letter to the Central Valley Flood Protection Board and the California Department of Water Resources.

"We also fear that there could be an increased risk of local flooding and a threat to continued viability of the Vic Fazio Wildlife Area."

As the California Department of Water Resources developed the first draft of the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, it did not consult the Yolo County Board of Supervisors or residents near the bypass about the proposal.

In the letter, Provenza expressed the board's surprise and disappointment at the lack of public outreach regarding a project of such magnitude.

Yolo County Supervisor Matt Rexroad, who represents Elkhorn, a community that would likely be severely impacted by the bypass project, said, "I was shocked by the complete lack of outreach to the board and my constituents whose homes and livelihoods are threatened by this proposal."

According to the Department of Water Resources, the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan will guide California's participation

and influence federal and local participation in managing flood risk along the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River systems.

The plan proposes a system-wide investment approach for flood management in areas currently protected by state flood control facilities.

The Central Valley Flood Protection Board is scheduled to adopt the plan by July. Following the initial adoption, the proposed projects will be further studied and defined before the plan is updated again in 2017.

In light of the short time frame for adoption of the plan, Provenza emphasized the importance of collaboration between state and local government.

"Yolo County is deeply concerned that the Department of Water Resources' actions reflect an attitude that the state has the right to propose projects that profoundly affect local land use without the involvement of local elected officials and other stakeholders," he said.