

## **Garamendi Introduces Bipartisan Agricultural Floodplain Management Act**

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman John Garamendi (D-Fairfield, CA), a former Insurance Commissioner and a life-long rancher, has introduced the bipartisan Advancing Agricultural Floodplain Management Act, H.R. 6034.

The bill addresses a serious problem for farmers who produce crops and raise livestock in floodplains. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently underway with a nationwide effort to produce new floodplain maps, and many of the levee systems that protect agriculture land have been downgraded in this process. Despite the fact that agriculture is the best and lowest risk use of the floodplain, FEMA's current approach under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) does not recognize the unique characteristics of small agriculture communities and treats agriculture structures the same as any other nonresidential building.

This one-size-fits-all policy has potential to drive farmers out of business, as many agricultural buildings cannot be flood-proofed to meet NFIP standards while still remaining functional and affordable for the farmer. In addition, agricultural areas that have robust flood protection from non-accredited levees are treated as though they have no flood protection at all, and the rates farmers pay in these areas reflects that.

The Advancing Agricultural Floodplain Management Act calls for a study conducted by the USDA and FEMA, in direct participation and cooperation with local landowners, community leaders, and agriculture and insurance industry representatives, to evaluate the impacts of the NFIP's building restrictions on small agriculture communities.

"Farmers in California, and soon across the country, are facing a real roadblock to the continued success of their businesses," **said Congressman Garamendi**. "The incorporation of agricultural areas into FEMA's new floodplain maps will make it too expensive for many farmers to build structures needed for agricultural production. The Advancing Agricultural Floodplain Management Act would help remove this roadblock by getting everyone to the table, so we can work out a solution."

**Garamendi continued**, "This issue is critical to the livelihoods of farmers in my region. I will continue to advocate on their behalf, so that they can continue to Make It In America and grow it in America."

"This bill is an important step toward finding a balance between the need for flood management security while at the same time assuring the farming community in California is not adversely affected," **said Congressman Dan Lungren**, an original cosponsor of the legislation. "California leads all the states in agriculture production and is the breadbasket of the world. California ranks 5th in the world in agricultural trade. So it is critical not just to California but also the nation and the world that the farmers' unique situation be appropriately addressed in flood plain management."

“This bill is a critical step forward in ensuring agricultural areas and small, rural communities continue to prosper,” said **Supervisor Jim Provenza, Chair of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors**. “Yolo County is hopeful that if the bill passes, the task force would identify solutions to some of the pressing problems resulting from federal floodplain policies that do not distinguish between rural and urban areas.”

“The unique characteristics of agricultural and small communities need to be recognized under the NFIP or the existing agriculture enterprises and their dependent small communities will continue to degrade and ultimately fade away,” said **Kristi Moore for the Agricultural Floodplain Management Alliance**. “We commend Congressman John Garamendi and Congressman Dan Lungren for introducing the Advancing Agricultural Floodplain Management Act. We believe this bill and the study it authorizes is the first step in better understanding the impact of floodplain management practices in agricultural areas and rural communities.”

For more on this problem, read the Ag Alert article [“Remapped flood zones mean new restrictions”](#) or watch this [short Rural TV segment](#). The Advancing Agricultural Floodplain Management Act is a stand-alone bill of a measure in H.R. 4020, Congressman Garamendi’s [Flood Insurance for Farmers Act](#).

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