SBFCA BOARD AUTHORIZES BALLOTTING FOR PROPOSED ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

Ballots will be sent on or about May 1 to owners of 34,000 properties in Butte and Sutter Counties

On April 14, the Sutter Butte Agency Flood Control Agency (SBFCA) Board of Directors unanimously authorized balloting for a property assessment for levee repairs. Assessment revenues would provide the local cost share for $250 million in levee improvements along the west bank of the Feather River, from Thermalito Afterbay south to the Sutter Bypass.

Assessment ballots will be sent on or about May 1 to owners of 34,000 properties in Butte and Sutter Counties that receive a special benefit from levee improvements. In this case, properties will benefit from stronger flood protection and the avoidance of water damage to structures, their contents, and land.

Individual property assessments are calculated based on their location (relative flood risk), depth of flooding, land use type, square footage of any structures, and size of the parcel.

Property owners can look up their proposed assessment online at www.sutterbutteflood.org (click on “Calculating Your Proposed Assessment”).

According to the National Flood Insurance Program, as little as five inches of flooding can result in more than $11,000 in property damage to a single-family residence. Some of the 34,000 properties within SBFCA’s proposed assessment district are at risk for flood depths up to 20 feet. Flood depths for the majority of properties range from 2-6 feet.

Levees along the west bank of the Feather River could catastrophically fail due to water pushing under and through levees. In their current condition, these levees do not meet federal standards for 100-year flood protection. For that reason, most of Sutter County and large portions of Butte County are scheduled to be “re-mapped” by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as Special Flood Hazard Areas. Once that happens, most property owners with mortgages will be required to purchase higher-cost flood insurance. More restrictive building codes would also take effect, making it more difficult and costly for property owners to improve or replace structures.

SBFCA wants to issue $72.5 million in construction bonds to fix Feather River levees. Assessment revenues would be used to fund project design and permitting, repay bonded construction debt, and provide the local cost share required to secure another $172.5 million in state funding for the project. If successful, SBFCA’s plan would keep more than 34,000 properties in Sutter and Butte Counties out of state and federally-designated floodplains, or remove them if mapping has already occurred.

SBFCA will host a series of open house meetings for property owners during the first two weeks in May. For the latest information, please visit SBFCA’s website at www.sutterbutteflood.org.

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The Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency – a joint powers authority of Sutter and Butte Counties, the cities of Biggs, Yuba City, Gridley, and Live Oak, and Levee Districts 1 and 9 – was formed in September 2007 to finance and construct regional levee improvement projects.