

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 27, 2023

The Honorable Michael L. Connor
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Assistant Secretary Connor:

In advance of your upcoming trip to tour the Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project (Pajaro) in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties in California, we ask that you take immediate steps to provide emergency relief to the towns of Pajaro and Watsonville and to accelerate construction of the federally authorized levee project.

As you know, the community of Pajaro experienced a serious levee failure on March 11, resulting in the evacuation of more than 2,000 people, 200 water rescues, significant flooding of farms, and closure of a major transportation artery (Highway 1). The great majority of those impacted by the floods are farmworkers who have lost both their homes and their livelihoods. As California experiences another atmospheric river storm that will stress the already impacted levee system, we are requesting your assistance in providing emergency repairs and in expediting construction of the Pajaro project.

Specifically, we urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to 1) provide P.L. 84-99 funds for emergency rehabilitation in a manner that rebuilds the levees to meet higher performance standards, 2) to expedite the requisite engineering reviews and project agreements, 3) to expedite the expenditure of the \$149 million in Construction funding provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, 4) to provide additional federal construction funds to fund this project to completion, and 5) to encourage the use of “design-build” or other innovative delivery methods in order to execute this project in an expedited manner.

We remain extremely grateful that this Administration, through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, provided \$149 million toward construction of the project. While it was not soon enough to avoid the most recent flood, it was an historic achievement for a project that has been continually neglected for over 50 years.

Thank you for your attention to this important project, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress