



# Legislative Priorities



*Our objective is to provide incentives for local sponsors to invest in flood protection systems and reduce flood risk. Given the current efforts to reduce federal spending and the historically very long timeframes for the Corps of Engineers to pay for and implement flood protection improvements, these proposals should be particularly timely.*

1. Pass H.R. 898. This bill postpones the adoption of new Flood Insurance Rate Maps by FEMA up to seven years providing that a local sponsor can credibly demonstrate a good-faith effort to make levee improvements to address deficiencies in flood protection disclosed through a FEMA certification inspection. In order to take advantage of this provision, a local sponsor would need to have a funded plan to make necessary levee improvements, make significant efforts to promote the purchase of flood insurance, adopt a robust reconnaissance plan to be used during high water events, and develop and adopt an evacuation plan to be used during a catastrophic flood event.
2. Change the methodology by which FEMA remaps areas behind de-accredited levees. Under current procedure, following a levee de-accreditation by FEMA, new FIRMs are drawn with the assumption that there are no levees or other flood protection systems in place at all. This approach significantly exaggerates flood risk and has profound economic effects on the levee-protected area, including loss of property value and limitations on economic growth. We support an administrative rule or legislation an approach that recognizes the presence of and historical performance of existing local flood protection systems and considers typical floodfighting efforts in determining the boundaries of special flood hazard areas.
3. Adopt legislation to extend the A99 flood insurance rate map classification to consider projects done with local funds by local sponsors. Under current FEMA regulation 44 CFR 61.12 the Administrator can grant A99 zone designation after 100 percent of the funds have been authorized for a project that will remove an area from a special flood hazard zone, at least 60 percent of the funds have been appropriated, and 50 percent spent. The significance of the A99 zone is that flood insurance rates will be the same as if the area was fully protected.
4. Allow for local expenditures to improve a federal levee to serve as the local-share for future federal projects. This is known as a credit for “work-in-kind.” Local expenditures made to advance a federal project would be considered as the local cost-share for future federal projects. The authority for work-in-kind credit has already been provided in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007, Section 2003, titled “Written Agreement for Water Resources Projects.” Current legislation authorizing work-in-kind credit recognizes only those projects authorized after 1986. The projects in our area however, were authorized in Flood Control Acts passed in the 1930’s.

5. Allow the Corps greater flexibility in reprogramming funds between authorized projects by removing Committee approval requirements for reprogramming. There are multiple discrete authorized federal projects in our area. Even though these projects are part of a single system, appropriations are made by individual project and may not reflect current priorities. Greater flexibility with reprogramming granted to the Corps would facilitate the most cost-effective and productive management approach to improving the levee system.