



SB 638 (Eggman) : Climate Resiliency and Flood Protection Bond of 2024 Context on the Importance of this Bill

With the Ark Storms and floods experienced last January in the Delta and greater San Joaquin Valley, local-based issues became apparent when it came to responses from emergency and county services and localized flooding. Delta communities are not new to the concept of seeing levee upgrades projects being done with no community involvement or input to address specific community needs and concerns. The outreach and work that environmental justice groups do is vital to ensure that restoration projects are done right for the communities impacted. Flood infrastructure improvements can be linked to recreational projects and beneficial uses. Among these issues, there is a need for local groups to aid in addressing a concrete list of resources from trusted community members, education and outreach surrounding local flood evacuation plans, flood preparedness, and the need to overcome the language barrier in live emergency response updates from the county. Senate Bill 638 would fund projects in both urban and rural areas throughout the state. More than half of the money would be used to fund improvements within the Central Valley (a historically disinvested area when it comes to flood protection), much of which is protected by an aging system of levees, weirs, and bypasses for which the State of California bears ultimate responsibility for operating and maintaining. If these deficiencies go unaddressed, it will result in incomplete flood mitigation projects that will not improve the quality of life for environmental justice communities.

Bill Overview:

Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman (D-Stockton) and Senator Roger Niello (R-Fair Oaks) announced the introduction of legislation (SB 638) to place a \$4.5 billion flood protection and climate resiliency bond on the statewide ballot in 2024. The document itself is called the Division 36. Climate Resiliency and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2024 Draft and the lead on this is the Department of Water Resources. SB 638 would allocate \$1 billion to provide for the state's share of nonfederal costs of urban flood risk reduction projects that are located outside of the Central Valley. Levees, which are critical to protecting farms, legacy towns, regional transportation and utility infrastructure in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, as well as protecting water quality for Delta farms and federal and state water project exports, would receive \$500 million. Consistent with the Conservation Strategy under the state's Central Valley Flood Protection Plan 2022 Update, the legislation would allocate \$500 million for multi-benefit flood management projects that restore floodplains for fish and wildlife habitat while reducing

flood risk for urban and rural communities, including \$100 million for coastal watershed projects. If approved by a 2/3s vote of both houses of the legislature and signed by the Governor, the bond would then need to be approved by a majority of voters in the November 2024 statewide general election.

The Flood Bond Act of 2024 addresses the following:

- The funding need for flood protection infrastructure and levee upgrades and multi-benefit floodplain restoration
- The incorporation of environmental justice communities in flood bond guideline and flood project meetings
- The funding needed to aid local environmental justice groups in ensuring that community benefits, funding and flood control gaps are addressed in local flood mitigation projects