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COCHRAN PUSHES DELTA FLOOD CONTROL THROUGH SENATE COMMITTEE

The Energy and Water Resources Subcommittee panel in the U. S. Senate adopted funding measures last week that will bring increased flood protection to cities and counties in the footprint of federal water resource projects in the Tallahatchie, Quitman and Coahoma County area, as well as the five-county South Delta region.

In addition to funding for measures to reduce floods throughout the Delta and to maintain flood control reservoir operations on Arkabutla, Sardis, Enid and Grenada Lakes, behind the efforts of U. S. Sen. Thad Cochran, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, funds were also dedicated toward a feasibility study and site location analysis for the establishment of an Environmental Education and Interpretative Center to be located in the South Delta.

“Without the funding to meet such basic needs as raising the height of the Mississippi River levees, which this bill does, a 1927-type flood would overtop the levees somewhere between Greenville and Mayersville, and put 5-7 feet of water in the Greenville Ramada Inn ... and while a flood of this magnitude is not a frequent event, the damages related to the potential of even small floods is something that requires responsible citizens and members of Congress doing everything possible to avoid such an event,” stated Ken Murphree, chairman of the Delta Council Flood Control Committee.

The Yazoo River Channel Enlargement Project received \$20 million in the Senate Appropriations measure, which will bring the flood protection features of the project into Tallahatchie County, as it proceeds northward toward Marks.

The Yazoo Backwater Project, which is the only remaining Delta Project that has not yet initiated start-up, will manage floodwaters in the South Delta during periods when the Mississippi River is at full stage, and therefore, prevents the Mississippi Delta’s rainfall from evacuating through the South Delta into the Yazoo River. The Yazoo Backwater Project received the amount requested to fully fund the final pre-construction phase.

Al Rankins, president of the Board of Supervisors for Washington County and longtime leader of the Delta Council Flood Control Committee stated, “Senator Cochran has always been able to deliver for the Delta in matters that are unique to the Delta, and certainly we are grateful that he remains committed to probably one of the most fundamental hindrances which faces the Mississippi Delta year-in and year-out, and that is protection from floods.”