

Delta Flood Control Projects Pass Congress

STONEVILLE - In the wake of a national disaster caused by the combination of Hurricane Katrina, failed levees and failed flood pumps, Congress, behind the strong support of U. S. Sen. Thad Cochran, appropriated funds in the Water Resources Appropriations Bill last week to complete features of the Mississippi River and Tributaries flood protection program.

For the Mississippi Delta, the Appropriations Act includes vital funding for the Yazoo-Tallahatchie-Coldwater River Channel Enlargement Project, which holds the only promise of bringing 100-year flood protection to the small, rural population centers of Glendora, Lambert, Marks, Tutwiler, and other northwest Mississippi areas.

Additionally, the long-awaited Yazoo backwater pumps, authorized by Congress in 1941 to alleviate flooding in an area of the South Delta which is encompassed by levees, received a huge boost in funding.

Federal-state agencies have begun to conclude the process of completing details on the environmental design in order to move from planning to construction phases.

“Although our region is not nearly as densely populated as the city of New Orleans where so many people suffered, those of us who live in the South Delta are reminded that we have the same challenge as New Orleans, because we are enclosed by levees on the Mississippi River and the Yazoo River, to protect us from Mississippi River flooding. But without pumps, we are levied in and have no way to evacuate the water which runs down on us from more than 4,000 square-miles of natural drainage from areas as far away as Clarksdale,” stated Issaquena County Supervisor Willie Bunton, who has led efforts to complete the Yazoo Backwater Pump Project.

“Whether you live in the Greenwood area, in the North Delta around Marks, or in Greenville or the South Delta, we owe a debt of gratitude to U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran for his persistent and committed drive to bring about completion of flood control projects that will result in 100-year flood protection for property and communities throughout Northwest Mississippi,” stated Kent Wyatt, the former president of Delta State University who now serves as president of Delta Council, the regional economic development organization representing the area.

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